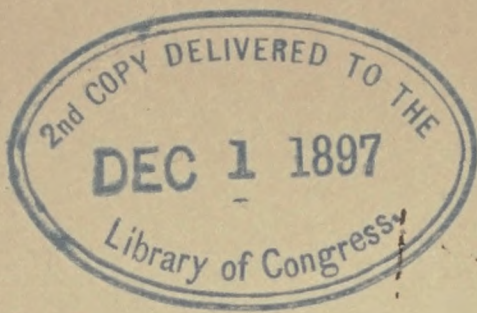


DOROTHY DRAYCOTT'S TO-MORROWS

Virginia F. Townsend





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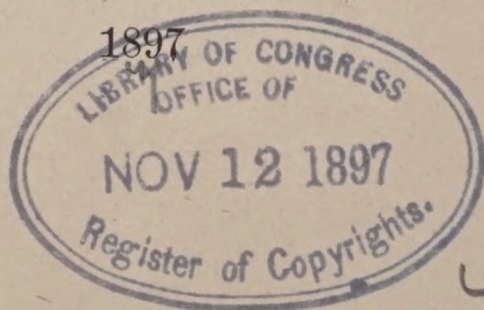
BY

VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND

AUTHOR OF "DOROTHY DRAYCOTT'S TO-DAYS" "THAT QUEER
GIRL" "LENOX DARE" "A BOSTON GIRL'S AMBITIONS"
"MOSTLY MARJORIE DAY" ETC.

BOSTON

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DOROTHY DRAYCOTT'S TO-MORROWS

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith
Norwood Mass. U.S.A.

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DOROTHY DRAYCOTT'S TO-MORROWS

I

TALK THAT WENT AFIELD

SWIFT footsteps rang along the upper hall. They were followed, in an instant, by a loud imperative knock on the panel. There was no pause for a reply before the door swung back, and a strong masculine voice with the unmistakable quality of training and refinement exclaimed: "Let all that stuff slide! This is an outdoor's day with a vengeance. Come and see it."

"Do you call that *stuff*, you unappreciative creature?" The voice this time was distinctly feminine—a young, sensitive voice with a dash of defiant fun; some other things, too, for which one does not so easily find the right word.

The speaker held up triumphantly a sketch in water-colors; she had been absorbed for the last hour in putting on the final touches.

Tom Draycott strode forward, stood at the back of his sister's chair, and gazed over her shoulder in silence. The sketch was a very simple study, but a lovely bit of work had been made of a handful of nodding ferns and grasses, a big boulder with pale green and rich brown lichen, across which had fallen a spray of brier, with a

single wild rose. The flower — a bit of glowing crimson against the lower color tones — was likely to bring back to the gazer the scent of a whole bush of blossoming wild roses on some old, grass-grown highway.

"Pretty!" commented Tom, with a man's reserve of adjectives, after he had bestowed a few moments on the picture. "But come and see what is awaiting you out doors!"

"Just a few more finishing touches, Tom, and I will."

"As though I didn't know what those mean! You will be pottering for the next hour, with no idea of what you are losing outside. I tell you this morning is one of the year's masterpieces, — it's last too, judging from the date, — in this line."

"Well, I will join you in ten minutes."

Tom Draycott, with a half-perfunctory grunt, took himself off.

Under ordinary circumstances his sister would have responded eagerly enough to his invitation, but "finishing touches," whether they are the tints of a picture or words of a poem, are not easily put aside by artist or author.

Anybody who had known Tom Draycott six years ago would recognize him at a glance as he drops into a large bamboo chair on the upper piazza at Red Knolls. It is true he is several inches taller; his chest has a wider girth, and the carriage of his head on his straight shoulders an air of riper manhood. His brown, thick mustache is becoming, and the maturing process has improved him, although he will never be as handsome a man as his father. But a stranger, with a penetrating glance or two at the character of face and figure, would have felt some of the best things had gone to his making.

The external changes, however, are not the most important ones with Tom Draycott. He has gained much in experience and knowledge of the world; he is less arrogant, too, in the expression of his opinions than he was at the close of his Sophomore period. Indeed, he regards the youth of six years ago as, in some respects, a very rudimentary creature.

The chief events in his life during these years can be related in a few sentences. At the close of his university course, he entered the Harvard Law School; he spent one vacation in Europe, and when he had finished his legal studies he was abroad again for nearly six months.

"You must take Europe in bits," his father had said to him. "We can't spare you from Red Knolls very long; what is more, your place and your work are in your native land, and you will not be better fitted for either by spending all your youth in globe-trotting."

With this admonition Tom Draycott had made the most of his time, not staying away long enough to acquire new habits, and coming home in a half-alienated, half-critical mood with American life and ideas. He saw the Old World—its most famous scenery, its strange races, its treasures of art—with the fresh delight and eagerness of young manhood. It was a deepening and broadening experience, coming at the right time.

On his return home he entered a law-office. It had an old, solid reputation in Boston, and its head was also an old friend of Donald Draycott's. It was regarded in law-circles as a splendid opening for his son.

The deep piazza where Tom Draycott is sitting spans the back of the wide, half-century mansion. At his feet lies the garden which the first American Draycott laid out and cultivated more than two hundred years ago.

Some of the ancient fruit trees and bushes are still vigorous. It is a fascinating old place, with footpaths twisting among flower-beds which make a world of gay bloom for more than half the New England year. A number of pretty little summer-houses are scattered about at picturesque points. They give an air of human interest to the old garden, even in the dreariest winter day.

Outside the high terraces and grounds of Red Knolls, young Draycott sees the broad, historic highway making for the low, distant hills. Between these and himself are scattered thrifty New England villages — a massing of low, dark roofs against mounting church-spires. He notices how the dull brown sweeps of pasture-land bring out sharply the occasional masses of forest evergreenery. He has been perfectly familiar with this scene, from his earliest memory; yet it strikes him this morning with a fresh charm and significance, almost as though he had never seen it before.

The scene on which Tom Draycott gazed had been swept from horizon to horizon by the black frosts. Their breath had fallen on all lovely things like a devouring fire. The boughs where summer birds had nested and sung were bare and silent now. Not a wild flower made a gleam of color among the shrivelled brown grasses. It was as though leaf and bloom, as though song and fragrance, had never been. Yet it seemed to Tom Draycott as he gazed, that this day had some divine loveliness — some mystery of beauty — which no other had worn in all the year's great gift of days. It stood between the black frosts and the white snows with such ineffable peace and shining; its skies one unclouded, radiant azure, its soft mellow sunshine transfiguring all things it touched, its hazes on the distant hills shades of ame-

thyst and purplish-gray, melting into one another—a perfect Indian-summer day.

Tom Draycott had brought his writing-pad with him, intending to spend the interval before Dorothy's appearance in making some notes for future reference in a law-case that was pending; but that mystic charm of the day held his gaze—drew it from point to point like a spell.

In a few moments swift feet crossed the threshold, and Dorothy Draycott stood by her brother's side.

“Look there!” he said; a sweep of his arm took in the whole horizon.

She did look in unbroken silence, her gaze drinking it all in—sky and atmosphere and landscape.

She stands by her brother's side—our Dorothy of six years ago—in a soft dress of summer-wool texture, of pale amber tint; a dress laid aside when the frosts came, but brought into service again with the milder temperature. One, seeing her now and remembering the girl of seventeen, might exclaim in good faith, “You are not in the least changed!” But a longer, more penetrating gaze would detect the difference—not merely in added height, but in soft touches and faint chiselling of facial lines. The rose-tint has hardly deepened in her cheek, though the olive skin has a richer tone. The eyes and the smile are all Dorothy Draycott's. If changes and new meanings have entered into both, they are not of the kind which attracts a passing observation. The years from seventeen to twenty-three include many to-morrows, and as they come and go, noiseless as the stars, they work their own transforming processes on young, eager, sensitive souls.

In the silence you could hear the scratch of Tom's

style on his writing-pad. As he tore away the sheet, he exclaimed: "Well, isn't it about time for you to make a remark? I hadn't foreseen the show was going to strike you dumb!"

Dorothy seated herself near him in a low piazza rocker. "O Tom," the voice keyed low as in a kind of awed delight, "this is transcendent!"

"You have struck the right adjective the first time. I'm a hopelessly practical fellow at best, and delving among law documents isn't the sort of thing to stimulate a fellow's imagination. But I can feel the atmosphere of poetry in a day like this. If my stars had only added to my other shining gifts the tenth part of a muse, this scene must have inspired her. You used to be the versifier of the family, Dollikins."

She lifted her brows. "That was a long time ago, Tom. My songs get fewer and fainter of late years. They do not seem — worth while."

"Long time ago! Late years!" mimicked Tom. "How dismally sere and yellow-leafish that sounds! I used to think, when you occasionally condescended to give me a sample of your rhymes, that you had no reason to be ashamed of them. Decidedly the contrary."

"If you had only said so then, I should have stood on my head for pride and joy!"

"Well, I say it now, when my judgment and taste ought to be of more importance."

"Yes; and it is pleasant — very — to hear you say it, but my own standards have altered very much since the time I actually fancied I was going to be a great author and startle the world with my genius. I have learned that a few graceful rhymes do not make a great poet."

"Certainly not; but the greatest had to begin with the rhymes. 'The ladder which mounts to the skies' — you know the rest."

"Of course. That metaphor will always serve while the world stands. But, Tom," her voice took on a deeper, vibrant note, "that deep, full-volumed quality of song which goes swelling and singing around the world and into human hearts and lives is *not* in me. I once thought it was; I was very young then; so many others have made the same mistake! Perhaps every generation has as many poets as it needs. I don't mean to disparage what gift I have, though I hope it may sometime prove to be more than a pretty knack at rhyming. But I no longer cherish the dream of being one of the world's Immortals!"

"You don't seem, by that tone, to feel at all crushed by the fact."

"Shall I cry because I cannot have the moon?" poisoning her head in a way that made it seem a pity anything so bewitching should be lost on Tom, for whom it had not the zest of novelty. "The world down here is very lovely. Look at this day!"

At that instant a robin's song flashed into the silence, as though its clear, liquid notes were a part of some May-morning — one world of joyous greenery and gay blossoms and sun-drowned air. The voice should have come from some wild, leafy thicket all a-sparkle with morning dew, and tremulous with the touch of soft winds; but the bird was a-tilt on a great rose-bush, whose bare boughs and interlacing twigs stood out sharply on an edge of the terrace beneath the piazza.

The young people glanced at each other in mute recognition. After a moment's silence the joyful lilt

flashed out again — the song of the live, throbbing June in the slow heart of November. Then in a moment the bird darted from the shrubbery, and they watched it wing its flight through the air.

Dorothy turned her radiant eyes on her brother. "O Tom, that is what the day means! The bird is the poet!"

"Won't you translate its song then?"

"You have asked me to do what only a great poet could!"

"You can at least tell me what it means to you."

There was a little silence. Then, with heightening of color and quickening of breath, she began: "Don't you see? There was no regret in it — only a great hope and joy. What the song meant was not a farewell, but a promise! 'I am going away; do not grieve for me! The winter and the north-winds, the snows and the storms, must have their turn now. But I shall come back again! You shall see them all once more, — the wealth of leaves and blossoms, the joy of the spring, the glory of the summer, the splendor of the autumn! There is nothing you will miss — nothing you will lose!' That is what the bird's song said to me, Tom!"

"If the bird could only know, it would come back again and thank you with a throat full of November songs, Dollikins."

So these two talked, sitting on the piazza in the sunshine as they probably would not sit until April winds blew soft again. They said whatever came into their minds with the blissful freedom of fireside intimacy, and the talk went from grave to gay, from jest to earnest, as it had been doing all their lives. This was, however, subject to frequent interruptions. Some detail — strik-

ing or picturesque—in the landscape was constantly arresting the gaze of one or the other, who would break in: “Do you see what wonderful work the lights and shadows are making over there by the hedgerows?”

“Do observe the crossing and twisting of boughs in that big elm! If you get the right point, the sky shines between—bits of sparkling sapphire.”

Once, after a longer pause than usual, Dorothy broke in: “I am so glad Mr. and Mrs. Amoury came last night. Two blessed women are having a happy morning together.”

“No doubt,” assented Tom rather absently, occupied once more with his pad.

“I can’t imagine how Red Knolls is going to get along and those two people across the sea.”

This time Tom roused himself. “It will make a big gap in our lives.”

“Mrs. Amoury says they intend to be back in time to see Red Berry Roads grow green and open Amoury Roost late in May. She insists we are to come next summer with the dozen. You remember when papa and mamma were in California how we had our week with the youngsters.”

“I should think so! I was a newly fledged Junior at that time, and Fallows turned up in the happiest, most unexpected fashion; and you took it into your head one morning to go off junketing with the dozen, and as a sequence just escaped having your own neck broken and gave everybody a tremendous scare!”

“But I didn’t break my neck, you callous biped, and I saved that tooting infant’s! Mrs. Amoury assures me he is now an insufferable, vociferous, shock-headed nine-year-old!”

"Good luck to him!" ejaculated Tom, stripping off another thickly scrawled sheet. "Of course I concede that the whole thing was superbly brave on your part. But I devoutly hope you may never feel called to face such a risk again."

She drew a long breath; she spoke mostly to herself now. "I am not sure that it was brave, even. I never stopped to think; I only *went*; I did not know until it was all over that I was doing anything rash."

Tom probably did not hear; he was scribbling assiduously. A long silence fell. Dorothy was absorbed in the scene before her—in all that it included of wide horizon and luminous landscape and distant hills smothered in shining hazes, and in nearer effects of light and shade, of form and color. At last Tom, having scrawled off another sheet, looked up and saw the smile which unbent the line of her lips.

"What are you thinking about, Dorothy?"

"Oh, nothing—much! Go on with your work, Tom."

"Thank you! I have finished my stent. But I am conscious of a devouring curiosity to know what thought was at the bottom of your smile."

"I had no idea I was smiling. But the thought itself was too absurd—one of those things which show ineffably silly when brought into common daylight."

"Don't you suppose I have had thoughts of that sort myself—numerous as the sands on the sea-shore? Come, Dorothy!"

"Talk of a woman's insistence! But if you will have it, I was wondering if it was on such a morning as this that Shakspeare started to go up, for the first time, from Stratford to London."

Tom burst into a roar of laughter.

"There! But I might have known! I deserve it all for telling you."

"I beg your pardon. A fellow must have his laugh. But there was nothing absurd in your thought. It is easily accounted for too. You have been deep in Elizabethan literature and times of late. Strange! What a hold that live, virile old century gets of one. You breathe its atmosphere, you move among its scenes! I have been through it all, my dear, when I was younger than you, so I understand. As to your question, I can answer that decidedly. Unless English skies, atmosphere, and sunshine were, in the sixteenth century, very unlike what I found them in the nineteenth, that obscure youth, William Shakspeare of Stratford, never footed, rode, or made his way up to London in any public conveyance, on a day like this one."

"And think of what went with him, Tom — all that immortal procession of his characters — all that glorious group of dramas! It makes one hold one's breath! If anything had happened to him that day, — some very commonplace accident, you know, — what an immeasurable loss it would have been to the world!"

"Gracious! I should think so! A world without Hamlet, and the rest of them!" rejoined Tom, absently playing with his style.

"And he was a mere boy — at least, younger than you and I! If there was a soul in London who said to himself, 'Shakspeare is coming to town to have a bout with fortune,' it must have seemed a small affair to the speaker. And yet it was one of the world's great events."

"That is the old way!" rejoined Tom. "The world's grandest souls have not usually appeared with heralds, trumpets, and processions!"

A little later the talk had come back to the present. The young people were discussing a serial which was running through one of the principal magazines, and which was creating a good deal of interest in the reading world.

"Of course," Tom added to some other comments as he leaned his head against the back of his chair, and elongated his tall person in a luxurious, masculine fashion, "the drama is well worked up and the character-drawing in places very strong. But when you have granted so much — the weak point comes up. The hero is a woman's man. He behaves very grandly of course, in certain trying situations and conjunctions. But when all is said and done, your real flesh-and-blood, every-day man never reasons and behaves like that."

"What do you mean, Tom?"

"Just what I say. Women novelists — as a rule — fail when it comes to their men. Of course, these have masculine traits, but they do not represent the all-round, genuine biped. In a given condition they do not think, feel, or act as he does. They are the men whom women imagine and idealize, but they do not exist in matter-of-fact, every-day life!"

"But think of George Eliot's men."

"I did not assert there are no exceptions to the rule, though I am not prepared to admit she invariably and absolutely succeeds."

"Well, what have you to say about men's women?"

"I should imagine a woman herself best qualified to answer that question."

Dorothy reflected a moment. "I am not prepared now to express a general opinion. I do know, however, that one of my favorite authors seems to me to fail unaccountably

when it comes to *his* women. They lack clear outlines; they seem vague, unnatural. Somehow, I can't get hold of them."

"Then there's a false note, somewhere. But to get back to the book again — What a vast amount of misunderstanding, suffering, and tragedy might have been avoided by a very simple expedient!"

"What was that?"

"If the man could once have been made to perceive that the woman cared for him!"

"But that was just the one impossible thing. She could not take the initiative."

"I see no reason why she should not. Of course social laws, traditions, and all conservative forces would be against her. It would require a brave woman to go in the face of all those!"

"It would require something less admirable than bravery, I think!" with a challenging ring in her voice. "Do I really understand you to say, Tom Draycott, you would have a young woman propose to a man?"

"I mean certainly that I see no reason in the nature of things why she should not. It is difficult to discuss these matters dispassionately. We are all more or less under the bondage of social prejudices and conventional standards."

"Social prejudices! Conventional standards!" echoed Dorothy, all her young girl's strong sense of the proprieties rising in arms. "It is the man's part to seek, to sue, to win. Any change of rôles here would be unnatural, indelicate, monstrous! It would be a blow to the inborn reserves and instincts of womanhood. It would spoil all the romance of life!"

"Romance! Fiddlesticks! It would simplify matters

immensely, and let in some broad daylight on many a tragic situation."

There was a moment's pause. Dorothy suddenly changed her tactics. Her tone and air were the most innocent in the world, but there was a covert gleam in her eyes, which always put Tom on his mettle. "In discussing general questions of this sort, I have often observed that a personal application serves better than anything else: How would you enjoy having a woman propose to you, Tom Draycott?"

"That would depend—on a variety of circumstances."

"But you must see that it would be very embarrassing if you found it impossible to say 'Yes,' and shockingly ungallant to say 'No!'"

At this point the comic aspects of the situation as applied to Tom, struck Dorothy forcibly. She burst into uncontrollable laughter. Peal after peal rang gayly about the piazza.

"Dorothy," said Tom, keeping his countenance with some difficulty, "you are a terrible creature! Could feminine ingenuity and malice go farther? To conceive an innocent and helpless man in such a position, and then gloat over his misery!"

He boxed her ears—in pantomime.

But there was a manly ring in his voice when he said: "At all events, I should not be a cad! The woman's confidence would be sacred. I should never plume myself on it—never go about detailing it to my thousand and one friends, as so many of your sex feel privileged to do when it comes to a man's offer."

Dorothy felt he had scored a point here. "Nobody would think of your doing that, Tom," she replied with a thrill of sisterly pride in her tones.

But they were soon deep in the argument again. They kept it up for the next hour, treating the whole subject from masculine and feminine standpoints. The talk was very grave at times; but there were flashes of fun and innuendo, as were sure to be the case when these clever young people matched their wits against each other.

At last, Tom, getting up, and stretching his long limbs, said decidedly: "Dorothy, we may as well call off. There is no use arguing with you. You beg half the questions; you go from one point to another in the most inconsequent way, and you are — excuse me — hopelessly and femininely illogical!"

"Tom," retorted Dorothy, drawing down her mouth so that no telltale smile should be ambushed in the corners, "you have the most obstinate argumentative vein: it made the unhappiness of my infantile years; it has developed enormously since you received your legal diploma; I have observed that fact and mourned over it."

Tom received this thrust of home truths with granitic composure. "I flattered myself that I was making a plea for some portion of your sex," he said.

"What portion?" inquired Dorothy, sure that her turn was coming now from his half-injured, half-apologetic tone and air.

"For those who may never have an offer, or a satisfactory one. My plan would at least afford them a chance."

There was no reason, in the nature of things, why Dorothy should appropriate this remark to herself, but it suited her to pretend to. She rose with a great assumption of dignity.

"I shall not pursue this subject any longer," she said. "But I do not retire from the lists defeated; I appeal to the instincts of all ages and races, to the feelings and

intuitions of womanhood; and no Harvard alumnus — no member of the Boston bar, primed with learning and logic, and masculine conceit — shall make me budge an inch from my position!"

With this peroration she made him a bow and swept off to her room. Tom burst into a roar of laughter, and strode after her; but she was too quick for him; she whisked into her room and turned the lock.

Tom affected repentance, and tried to prevail on her to open the door; but his feint of humility was too transparent. Dorothy was inexorable.

At last, with a rejoinder, not remarkable for meekness, and another laugh, Tom took himself off to his room.

II

TWO WOMEN

"It often appears to me, Evelyn, that I am the most overrated person in the world!"

The voice was quite serious; yet had you not seen the speaker, you would have felt a smile had gone along with the words and subtly interpreted them.

"Grace!" the tone this time made the monosyllable a swift, amused disclaimer. "You must be the sole woman in the world who would have made a speech of that sort. It is the burning grievance of a large proportion of our sex that they are misunderstood, not appreciated, and all that. Your trouble seems to be, as you sit there this morning, you dear blessed woman, that you are ranked vastly above your deserts."

"Of course you are laughing at me; but I am very much in earnest."

"Of course you are too, or you would not be Grace Draycott! All you have said, however, only goes to prove how much to the point Donald's remark was last night, when we were walking in the grounds, and among other topics, talking you over."

The listener raised her eyebrows slightly. "Donald's remarks are usually much to the point when it does not come to talking over his wife with certain of his friends."

"Then you will probably not agree with him when he

said: 'If Grace would only be as just to herself as she is to other people! But I long ago gave up that as hopeless!'"

At that moment a robin's song gushed out in the stillness from the tall, leafless clump of hawthorn, a few feet from the window. The two women exchanged glances of mute delight. It was the same robin which, a few moments before, had startled the young people on the upper piazza. When the delicious notes broke out again, the two slipped noiselessly to the window. They were just in time to see the bird darting away through the blue shining air. There was no need to linger. It had delivered its message.

Grace Draycott and Evelyn Amoury, as they stood that November morning by the window, made, in all physical aspects, an effective contrast. One was a blonde, the other a brunette. The former had a slower grace of movement than her friend. She had a beautifully moulded head. Rich auburn gleams meshed themselves in her hair's brown abundance. Her large, deep-set eyes of a peculiar gray tint made one think of the sea in certain of its moods. It is not easy to describe her in detail. After all, the best thing which could be said of her had been said long ago: "Into her face a lovely soul had crept."

Evelyn Amoury, with her rich brunette color, her sparkling animation, her swift grace of movement and manner, was, as I said, a striking contrast to her friend, who was also several years her senior, though neither seemed to have passed the boundary of early middle life. They wore morning dresses of soft fabric, which suited them in color and style. Each had quiet, exquisite taste, and it was characteristic that each had, amid the hideous,

angular fashions of the last decade of the nineteenth century, managed to produce in their gowns an effect of simplicity and soft flowing lines.

Amoury Roost at Red Berry Roads, in southern New Hampshire, had just been closed. It was a tradition that the Amouries should spend a week with the Draycotts' before the winter home at Brookline should be opened.

The two had arrived the night before. But this year there was to be a diversion. John Amoury had decided to go abroad on some business which would keep him in England for several months. The later programme included a trip on the continent. The prospect of the long-impending absence lent, for all concerned, a peculiar interest to this visit. There was a feeling at Red Knolls that the winter would not be just the same with the Amouries left out of it.

After breakfast the two women came upstairs to Mrs. Draycott's room. It was tacitly understood that they were to have this first morning to themselves. The chamber had a southern and western outlook. It was a large room, and, in various ways, suggested its occupant to those who knew her best. The furnishings were partly old-fashioned, partly modern. A few choice landscapes and interiors illuminated the walls. While the room was not suffocated with ornament, it had, in the course of years, accreted a good deal in the way of bric-à-brac and decorative stuff which had some value to the owner, either intrinsic or from association.

The two stood for some time at the window, drinking in the radiant beauty of that Indian-summer morning. At last they turned away with something of its light and joy reflected in their eyes. Mrs. Draycott drew a low chair to her friend and seated herself opposite in another.

If two women are apart together in intimate companionship, their talk will be likely to form a sure index of character, whether they gravitate, by virtue of essential quality, to gowns and gossip, to servants and scandal, or fill the hour with nobler interchange of thought and sympathy which shall make it a helpful illuminating memory in their lives.

"Evelyn, dear," said Mrs. Draycott in her soft clear accents, "that robin's song must have said something to you. It seemed to break out from the very heart of June, and this is November — the eventide of the year."

"I was thinking as I listened, Grace, that the song seemed to have brought back something of all the glow and joy and bloom of my summers at Amoury Roost, and that I was so immeasurably glad to have listened with you." Mrs. Amoury leaned over, and with the swift vivacity which was one of her charms, laid her hands in her friend's.

"'And,' I said to myself as we stood by the window, 'I am so glad it is Evelyn, instead of another woman, to share the day and the song with me.'"

"I was sure they would both have the same meaning for you. What was it, Grace?"

The light grew deeper in the sea-gray eyes. "Really, Evelyn, it was not the 'good-night' of the year's November, but the 'good-morning' of next May I seemed to hear when the bird sang. Of course, there is all that lies between — the long, dark winter, the fierce storms, the white snows, and the earth under them in a sleep so still and frozen that it seems no spring could ever break it. But that is like my boy and girl when they kissed me 'good-night' and went happy and sleepy to bed. The night — to be filled with sweet, dreamless slumber

— was just a blank to them. They never cared for, never thought of that. It was the good-morning toward which all their eager life and interests turned. For that they were full of bounding hopes of plans and certainties.

“And so, this day, standing at the very gateway of winter, seems to have no consciousness of the long cold and silence, of the wild storms close at hand. What a divine joy, what a serene assurance, there is in the sky and the sunshine! It seems as though the day looked across the winter, and saw the summer and brooded content and joyful.”

The tears shone in Mrs. Amoury's dark eyes. “O Grace, you have interpreted them both, and they are one — the bird's song and the day's beauty. Yet, there are so many women who need both more than we do; and have not eyes to see, nor ears to hear.”

Then, as by one impulse, they both turned and looked out of the window, and the morning seemed to them to have gathered into its heart the very serenity, the repose and harmony, we go longing for, and in more or less blind ways, reaching after all our lives.

After a long silence, in which they feasted their gaze on the scene before them, they sat down again, and Mrs. Draycott said to her friend: “Evelyn, do you suppose there can be two happier women in the world than you and I are this morning?”

“I can't imagine it. Sometimes I say to myself, — ‘Evelyn Amoury, you don't deserve it! Why should you be singled out from other women for such content and blessedness! With such a striving and suffering world all about you too!’ First, I have John! You know all that means!”

“Yes; I have Donald!”

"And after we have named the supreme things, how many lesser ones follow!"

"And then think of those other lives set against ours with all their denials, wrongs, and sorrows! The contrast always pains and saddens me."

"Of course it does, you dear, conscientious thing! As though you weren't doing something all the time to lift the burdens of those other lives!"

"As though I didn't have the example constantly before me! What has become of your dozen?"

Mrs. Amoury lifted her eyebrows. "They have made some advance in evolution. But it is naturally a long, slow process. John assures me we cannot suppose they would unfold rapidly with a week or a fortnight—for it has come to that now—out of the year at Red Berry Roads. But there is perceptible progress. I think we have a hold on the girls and the gamins too, and that they will be better and happier all their lives because they have come to us."

At this point the talk diverged into a lighter vein. Mrs. Amoury related in her picturesque, sparkling fashion, various ludicrous incidents which had taken place during the last summer's visit of her protégés. These things were always occurring with their advent. She kept the most amusing of these *gaucheries* and *contretemps*, as she did other and finer things in the eventful fortnight, for Red Knolls.

But the two did not sit still very long. The day was like a powerful magnet—forever drawing them to the windows. And the woman with her lovely sea-gray eyes and the woman with her dark, tender ones, stood together and gazed on the earth which basked its "bare brown limbs" contentedly in the sunshine.

"I have had so many happy days at Red Knolls," said Evelyn Amoury, smiling on her friend; "but it seems as though this one were a little the dearest—the most beautiful."

"At least, it has something which the others could not."

"What is that, Grace?"

"Something of all our yesterdays."

At that moment light, swift feet scurried along the upper hall. A door closed; a lock clicked.

This was followed in a moment by a man's loud, rapid tread. His voice, as it came down the stairs, gave one the impression that it might any moment break out into a roar of laughter.

"I take it all back, Dollikins—every syllable! No doubt I was a wretch, a brute,—whatever bad names you will,—to make such an insinuation—to a girl's face, too! After such an *amende honorable*, you cannot refuse to open the door."

A bright-keyed, girlish voice answered this summons. The ladies could not catch the words, but there was a kind of gay defiance in the tones, and an evident refusal to unlock the door.

"Very well," came the response of defeated masculinity; "Have it all your own way. But I leave with this parting shot: you will live to be a Petruchio's Kate or a terrible-tongued spinster!"

And the speaker took himself briskly away.

"What does all that mean, Grace?" asked Mrs. Amoury, when they both had done laughing.

"It means that Tom and Dorothy are at it again. They will keep it up if they should live to see the next century out. It is so very like their old childish tiffs and tan-

trums. Of course they are older now, and their tempers do not run away with them so easily, and though the argument waxes warm, it usually ends in a jest. But when they get into a debate, the old scenes are always coming up to me, and Tom is six, with the settled conviction that the world was made for him, and an immense consciousness of his two years' seniority over his sister. He is very fond of her, but that by no means prevents his temper from getting the better of him and his quarrelling with her every day."

Mrs. Amoury laughed. "What a charming little brace they were, and so alive in every fibre!"

A sudden change flashed in Mrs. Draycott's face. "O Evelyn, dear, it seems like talking of yesterday, and yet, it is such a far cry to that time. The little boy and girl are gone from me forever!"

"I know, Grace; but you have that big, splendid Tom. There is Dorothy, too — such a lovely creature! Surely, you would not go back to-day?"

"No, Evelyn," she said softly and steadily. "But sometimes I think of another change that may be near at hand, — that would mean so much to us all. It seemed so far off then, that when I looked forward, I hardly dreaded it. Now I say to myself: 'It may come any time — in the most unexpected fashion. You must be ready for it, Grace Draycott!'"

"But nothing has yet happened? There is not, at present, the slightest probability of anything of that sort?" inquired Mrs. Amoury, with an eagerness which showed her heart was in the question.

Mrs. Draycott smiled into her friend's eyes. "Nothing, Evelyn. If it were otherwise, I should come to you first. But I know my boy and girl. To-day they

are both as heart-free as the children of whom I have been telling you."

Mrs. Amoury drew a long sigh of relief. "I must be jealous for you, Grace. It would hurt me to have a change enter into this perfect life at Red Knolls."

"I was sure you who are so close to it would feel like that. As for Dorothy — she does not consider such a possibility; neither does Tom, for that matter. But she is in that stage of girlhood when matrimony, as a personal affair, has a certain repugnance. The unconscious woman, at bottom, is instinctively and rather defiantly on the defensive. You understand that phase, Evelyn?"

"Perfectly. *I* have been a girl!"

"Then there is Tom. I know what possibilities of tenderness and nobleness are in his nature. I know how these would respond to certain influences and companionship, and how another kind — selfish and shallow — would be sure to bring out the limitations and faults of his temperament. I do not believe a wrong choice could wholly spoil his life. I think there is too strong and self-sustained an individuality at bottom for that; but how much a woman could do to make or mar his happiness! Then — in the midst of these thoughts — I suddenly reflect that some other mother may be looking at her young daughter now with all a mother's yearning forecast, wondering and fearing what sort of man may be the fate of the young life dearer than her own, and that this very girl may be my boy's wife! At such moments, I feel a pang of sympathy for that unknown mother!"

"But your boy, Grace, never could throw himself away — with such a mother!"

“‘With such a mother!’” Mrs. Draycott echoed the words half to herself. “If Tom did that, I should always hold myself in some way responsible!”

“Grace!”

“Yes; he has loved me more than anything in the world. For twenty-five years I have been the most intimate moulding force in his life. I have stood to him for all that is best and most sacred in womanhood. My influence has, in some aspects, been more constant and prevailing than his father’s. My errors may have been those of ignorance or inadequacy; but if, in the great crisis of his life, Tom’s heart or judgment should choose unwisely, could I hold myself blameless?”

“Of course you could!” rejoined Mrs. Amoury, with immense decision. “In that case, the fault—the mistake—would lie at Tom Draycott’s own door. You would not hold another woman to so stern an account as you hold yourself. I can hear you now making excuses for her.”

“Perhaps; one has a right to be severer with one’s self than with another.”

“As for Dorothy—good angels guard her when the time comes!” exclaimed Mrs. Amoury devoutly.

“I always shrink from facing that. I hug myself with the thought that she is my little girl still. All this may be weak or selfish; and when the hour comes, I shall remember what Donald has been to me. But is there another man in the world like him, Evelyn?”

“Only one,—John Amoury!”

“Oh, yes! Do forgive me that I forgot! Dear cousin John Amoury!”

And then the women—wives of more than two de-

cares — leaned forward and, out of the gladness of their hearts, kissed each other.

A little later, Mrs. Draycott was saying: "But, despite Dorothy's indifference to all we have been talking about, there are depths of passionate devotion in her nature. She is not given to wasting herself on light, emotional, and sentimental fancies, but she has in her splendid possibilities of loyalty and heroism."

"How often I have felt that, Grace!"

There was a little silence. A wind stirred the twiglets of bare trumpet-vine which made a blaze of red and yellow bloom about the window every midsummer, — a wind that lost itself a moment later among the thick-meshed branches.

When Mrs. Draycott spoke again, it was with a half-amused, half-indignant tone. "That name — mother-in-law — is always repugnant to me. When one thinks of the relation itself, — of all its closeness and significance, — one resents the horrid legal term. I am confident some man without a poetic fibre in him invented it."

Mrs. Amoury laughed. "No doubt you are right, Grace. It never struck me before. I wonder why," she continued a little later, half to herself, "John and I never regret we have no children of our own. Is it because we have so much beside?"

"Nobody need regret it whose happiness flows into so many children's lives," said Mrs. Draycott tenderly. "There are your dozen and a host of others — to say nothing of Tom and Dorothy. Their whole lives will be richer and happier because they have known you and John."

At that instant, there was a light knock at the door, and Dorothy Draycott stood smiling on the threshold.

"May I come in, mamma?" she asked. "I have a kind of feeling that profane feet have no right to invade this sanctum when you two are alone here together."

Both the ladies laughed. "You may come in, Dorothy," said her mother, "if you can behave better than I suspect you have been doing this morning."

She glided into the room with the swift elastic movement of youth; she dropped on a low lounge; she glanced around her with a demure look contradicted by a mischievous twinkle in her eyes. "The walls will tell no tales," she said, "but I feel something in the air! I told Tom this morning my left ear was burning, and he insisted that his was on the point of taking fire."

"What enormous vanity!" exclaimed Mrs. Draycott. "As though Evelyn and I could find nothing more important to talk about than your two incorrigible selves! We found several other topics interesting."

"But you won't deny, mamma —"

"I shall deny or affirm — nothing! It is my turn for questions. What have you and Tom been at loggerheads over this morning?"

Dorothy laughed gleefully. "We got into the most ridiculous argument."

"I was sure it was that when I heard the rush of feet, and the click of your lock. How often have I warned you against taking Tom too seriously! You know he can never resist the temptation of teasing you."

"I ought, after twenty-three years' experience of him and his ways. But my utmost indignation was justified on this occasion." The girlish laugh broke again.

"I cannot conceive how you and Tom can find any fresh topics for argument, though I must admit you both are fertile in inventing them."

"But neither you nor Mrs. Amoury could imagine what we drifted into this time. It all came of that last serial we have been reading. The literary work was well done and the wind-up was thrilling, but it just grazed the edge of a tragedy."

"O Dorothy, don't stop! This is getting interesting!" exclaimed Mrs. Amoury.

"It came down to a fine point with us both at last. It was, in short, whether a woman had not as good a right, in the nature of things, to propose marriage as a man."

At this point both the ladies, with an amused exclamation, laid down some ornamental work with which their hands, rather than their attention, had been engaged that morning, and gave their undivided interest to the speaker.

"Tom," continued Dorothy, sure of the instinctive sympathy of her audience, "took high ground—insisted that she had this right; that it was only another instance of the tyranny of habit and tradition that the woman should, under all circumstances, be debarred from taking the initiative in a matter where her own interests were so deeply involved. I, of course, took the opposite side, and supported it with all the eloquence at my command. I brought forward the feelings of all ages and peoples, savage and civilized, the instincts of womanhood, the natural relations of the sexes, and ever so much more. The discussion was kept up with the mutual forbearance and amiability which distinguish our talk on occasions of this sort."

The ladies laughed heartily. "It must have been delightful!" exclaimed Mrs. Amoury. "If I could only have done a bit of eavesdropping while that dialogue was going on!"

"But you shall have it all the same, dear Mrs. Amoury,"

subjoined Dorothy, and to the intense amusement of the small audience, she repeated the discussion which, an hour ago, had taken place on the piazza.

"Now, I appeal to you both!" she concluded. "Didn't that last insinuation of Tom's require heroic measures? Wasn't I justified in locking him out?"

Before Mrs. Draycott could rejoin, — the laughter must have its way first, — Dorothy's quick ears caught the sound of approaching steps. She sprang to the deep window-seat and disposed herself there, the impersonation of demure guilelessness.

Tom tapped at the door, which stood slightly ajar. It sprang wide at his mother's response. He removed his cap and bowed to the ladies. Like his sister, he entered with a jest. "Are these sacred precincts once more open to common mortals?"

Before anybody could reply, he caught sight of Dorothy, and burst out: "Oh, you ubiquitous young woman! Image of lamb-like gentleness and dove-like meekness! The sight of you is enough to drive a fellow into expletives!"

"O Tom, *must* you begin now!" admonished his mother.

"Begin! Do you know what indignities I have endured at that gentle being's hands? Behold her now! Yet within the last hour she has actually turned the key of her door on me!"

"Will you be good enough to state the reason?" inquired Dorothy very gravely.

"There was none, unless that I had the courage to avow my honest convictions in the face of feminine scorn and ridicule."

"Now, Tom, don't hedge in that fashion!" exclaimed

Dorothy, whose speech still retained an occasional echo of her brother's Sophomoric slang. "I have told mamma and Mrs. Amoury all about our talk and of your shameful implication when you were at last driven to the wall!"

"I might have known you had given your own version of the affair, from your Innocent Abigail expression! But I have only to say" — Tom straightened his shoulders and threw his head slightly back: "I may become the target for feminine ridicule; I may have keys turned on me; I may suffer the pangs of martyrdom, but I have unfurled my colors and I shall defend them to the last!"

"That sounds heroic, Tom; it certainly was melodramatic!" commented his mother.

Dorothy's eyes radiated fun when she spoke next. "I can think of one example — only one — which shows up Tom's position in all its absurdity!"

"Let us have it, by all means!" rejoined Tom, as, with the face of a young judge, he seated himself in front of her on the arm of an easy-chair.

"Just imagine mamma proposing to papa!"

The preposterousness of this suggestion would, of course, be most apparent to those who knew Mrs. Draycott best. There was one grand chorus of laughter, in which she herself joined, though the slightest possible flush crept into her cheek. "Oh, you insufferable children!" she exclaimed. In the next breath she added, "If you have any doubts on the subject — ask your father!"

"I should prefer to be excused," replied Dorothy, with eyes still radiating fun. "Papa would be indignant that anybody dared to suggest such a thing."

"Well, Grace, it is your turn now," interposed Mrs.

Amoury when the subsidence of the mirth gave her a chance.

"I am not prepared to answer at a moment's notice. The question has more than one side. No doubt I am a good deal under the influence of what Tom calls social tradition and prejudice. There may be cases in which it would be right — perhaps a duty — for a woman to act or speak. She must judge for herself. But it strikes me that the old way, which has the force of an unwritten law, has its roots in primeval instincts, in essential differences of sex, and in inborn reserves which are an inalienable part of womanhood."

"You have left me nothing to add, Grace," said Mrs. Amoury.

Tom lifted his tall figure from the chair-arm and bowed low to his sister. "The verdict has gone against me, Dorothy," he said.

Before she could answer, her mother spoke again. "But whether I am right or not in the feeling I have expressed, I want just for a moment to set this whole matter before you, Tom, in a personal light."

"I don't get your drift, mater."

"If it should ever come to choosing for yourself, my dear boy, I hope," her voice was a little tremulous, "your own heart will forestall all need of another's speaking for you."

Tom made a wry face. "But what if a fellow happens to find his heart a most impervious organ? In time he must begin to doubt its susceptibilities in these directions. Dollikins and I are left out. You and papa seem to absorb all the sentiment of the family."

But after the serious tenderness of his mother's words, the joke had, even to himself, a kind of false ring.

"It is high time we stopped this nonsense," interposed Dorothy. "Dear Mrs. Amoury, we will be very sensible young people for the rest of the day."

A new note was struck. The talk which followed was in a different vein.

Dorothy broke in suddenly. "O mamma, what do you think! We had a lovely surprise. A robin sang for us in the rose-bush on the terrace."

"Did you hear it, my dear! It sang for us on the hawthorn twig, and it seemed to be singing out of the heart of May."

"That brave little robin! It shall be remembered above all the summer birds that have gone into silence. I will paint it on the hawthorn bough in November."

At that instant the lunch-hour struck.

While they were at table, Tom was summoned to the telephone. He came back with a message from his father, who, with John Amoury, had decided to return early in the afternoon and have "an up-hill and down-dale" drive with their wives.

"Do you remember, Grace?" asked Mrs. Amoury with her infectious laugh, and setting down her tea-cup with emphasis. "They both insisted they should be breathlessly busy until evening, but this day has thrown its bewitchment over them. When they met at lunch, they both voted to 'throw business to the dogs.'"

"And our names are left out in all these 'merry junketing' plans!" remarked Tom to his sister, as, with a rather indolent air, he helped himself to a fresh bunch of grapes.

Old Ironsides had, two years before, gone the way of equine old age, and been succeeded by a handsome span named, respectively, "Cavalier" and "Roundhead." One

was a dark silky chestnut — a graceful creature; the other was a rich bay of a somewhat sturdier build, but a fine specimen of horseflesh. Despite the historical antagonism of their names, they worked splendidly in harness. As the pair would be out this afternoon, Sphinx would be the only animal left in the stalls. The little mare was now more than ten years old, but she carried her head as proudly and took the road with as fleet a pace as she had done in her friskiest youth. She became each year, if possible, a more precious possession to her mistress.

“You and I will grow old together, Sphinx!” the girl would say, as she patted the mare’s neck.

“I have engaged to go to the Wallings’ garden party.” Dorothy spoke now in a pause of the talk. “It is to be an impromptu affair gotten up in honor of this day. It is a shame to keep Sphinx in her stall in such weather. Can’t you take her out, Tom?”

He had never been astride her in these six years. He sometimes drove her when his mother or Dorothy accompanied him; but it was tacitly understood that nobody should mount the mare but her mistress.

Dorothy had spoken impulsively. As she turned to her brother with the words, a flash of consciousness came and went in his face. She caught it. A far-away summer afternoon sprang to life in the girl’s memory. She sat once more in her chamber and heard the mad roar of the hurricane outside, and did not heed it because of the more awful tempest which was shaking heart and brain to their centre.

His sister’s light question had also sprung the old memory into vivid life with Tom Draycott. He, too, was suddenly living it all over again — that one hour which

had wrought some enduring change in his proud, arrogant youth! He was out in the wild welter of the storm; he heard the deafening roar of the winds; he saw the livid green of the towering waves; he felt the old agony and despair clutch at his heart.

They had risen from the table. The young people had not alluded to that hour for years; but Dorothy had a flashing intuition of all her light words, like the waving of a magician's hand, had started to life.

She stepped swiftly to Tom's side; she laid her hand on his arm. The women, absorbed in their talk, did not notice.

"Tom," — there was a pleading note in the low-pitched voice, — "I want you should take Sphinx out this afternoon."

She saw the look in his eyes which she remembered as he bent over her bedside when she lay helpless and stricken at her very life.

"Well, then, there is no use kicking — Sphinx and I have no choice but to go if you insist upon it!"

Dorothy understood perfectly all the jaunty air, the jesting words, were meant to hide.

III

SOUNDINGS IN DEEPER SEAS

A FULL moon was in the November sky and all about her the shining hosts of the stars. Down below, the moonlight had wrought its old miracle, and the earth lay in a weird white radiance—all its bareness covered, all its scarred, frost-bitten places transfigured, by that mystic loveliness of light.

At Red Knolls four people came out on the piazza, Mr. and Mrs. Draycott being detained awhile in doors after dinner.

John Amoury walked with Dorothy, and his wife with Tom Draycott. Was it the moonlight, or those two figures in front of her, which brought up the memory of another moonlit evening, with the same tall girl and a taller youth by her side, that made a sudden diversion in the animated talk Tom and Mrs. Amoury were having with each other?

As she was a woman and a tactful one, she approached the subject with some feminine indirection. "I wonder if you have forgotten, Tom, a moonlit walk which you and I had together on our piazza at Amoury Roost more than six years ago?"

"My dear Mrs. Amoury, you and I have had so many delightful walks both at Amoury Roost and at Red Knolls!"

The lady lifted her fine dark brows quizzically. "O Tom, that was very handsome, but I feel just a little as though I had been robbing somebody!"

"Who, pray?"

"Well, some fair young girl of that gallant speech."

"But it would not have been half so true in the fair young girl's case."

"Of course if I pretended to doubt that, it would be an affectation. But, to be serious again. This perfect night — the stillness, the moonshine — has brought up that other vividly to me. It all seems only yesterday. You and Dorothy had come to us for a fortnight the summer your father and mother were in California."

"Oh, yes! I remember now. Dorothy and I were talking of it only this morning. She went on a lark with your dozen and just escaped — Heaven knows what!"

"But she did escape, and her act was a very brave one. Can you recall a prophecy I made as we walked together the night after all that had happened?"

"I don't — at this instant; I must be very stupid."

"I told you Dorothy was going to be a very beautiful woman."

"I remember, Mrs. Amoury."

"Look at her now as she lifts her face to John, who is saying something which interests her, and deny, if you can, my prophetic flash at that moment!"

"I can't deny it. You won't expect, however, that a man will go into raptures over his own sister. He leaves the adjectives to the other fellows!"

They walked a minute or two in silence.

Then Mrs. Amoury put the question to which all this talk had skilfully led up. "I remember your classmate,

young Fallowes, was with us at that time. What has become of him, Tom?"

"I wish I could answer your question more intelligently. I have not had a syllable from him in years! One would almost fancy he must be in hiding, only that would be so unlike Fallowes."

"He struck John and me as a very fine fellow."

"He was." Tom warmed to his subject. "I knew Fallowes thoroughly. The fibre there was sound to the core. We were great cronies during our last years at Harvard. We made plans for meetings after our graduation. We had arranged especially for a tramp through the White Mountains, and a month among the Maine lakes, when news of his uncle's sudden illness shut down on all that. Philip set out for Colorado at once; his uncle died soon after his arrival. This uncle was his only near living relative, and not only brought up his nephew, but had almost sole management of his fortune. Philip used to talk about him often; he simply adored the man. I have a feeling, less from what Philip wrote than what he did not, that he had hard lines afterward. It would be awfully rough on him, too, after the easy, luxurious life he had led. He wrote that he was going up into a remote mountain mining-camp to have a hand-to-hand tussle with fortune. I suspect that he has been leading a primeval life in those wild mining regions. One can hardly imagine how he would get on there with his tastes and habits. If I were not," continued Tom in half monologue now, "at such a critical stage in the up-hill work of a newly fledged lawyer, I would cut everything and rush off to Colorado on a hunt for Philip Fallowes."

While this talk was transpiring, another characteris-

tic one was going on between the pair just ahead. John Amoury and Dorothy Draycott's fondness for each other dated from her infancy. Indeed, the man who had so charming a personality, and so powerful an attraction for all sorts of people,—old and young, wise and foolish,—often had queried with himself whether a girl of his own could have been more precious to him than this tall, brown-eyed daughter of his friend.

"Oh, what a wonderful night!" Dorothy broke out suddenly after an interchange of sparkling jests and playful talk. "Just look at those shadows around the shrubbery—line and mass—drawn black against the moonlight."

"Yes; I have been observing them. One feels the inadequacy of words when one stands face to face with the loveliness of a night like this."

"But do find something to say, Mr. Amoury," pleaded Dorothy with the eager insistence of youth. "One cannot stand quite dazed and dumb in the presence of all this—when one has the gift of speech."

He considered a moment. "There is a line of old Homer's which always strikes me as having something of the elemental power and simplicity of nature about it. I never repeat it to myself without feeling the grandeur, the breadth, of horizon in it.

" 'And when in heaven the stars about the moon
Look beautiful.' "

She drew a long breath. "Oh, yes! that has the largeness of the sky over us. Am I hopelessly stupid, Mr. Amoury, that while I do enjoy Homer,—at least when papa reads him,—I still miss something—I cannot tell

what? I can only feel it. It seems to me it is the something which this night means."

She spoke slowly, almost shyly, as though seeking for her words and half afraid of them.

"I understand, Dorothy. It is something which the old Greeks, with all the immortal loveliness of their art, never attained—the 'Spiritual element in Nature.' "

"Ah, I see what you mean."

"And in perceiving that 'Idea which lies behind all beauty and interprets it, lies the real glory of our own age—its supremacy over all which has preceded it.' Dorothy," drawing himself up sharply, "what am I saying to you?"

"Just what I like to hear. Do go on!"

He laughed. "How some of your gilded youth would want to shoot me—an old fellow—walking with you in this moonlight and talking in such a strain!"

"As though I would not rather walk with you in this moonlight and hear you talk in just such a strain, than with all the gilded youth between here and the Arctic Circle!"

A little later, when the talk had slipped to a lighter key, John Amoury said: "Our hunter's moon must go the way of the harvest moon in a few nights, and then all the year will have left for us is December's; and we do not walk the piazzas, my dear, under December moons, either at Red Knolls or Amoury Roost."

"There is something which I very much want," broke in Dorothy suddenly, with a kind of eager playfulness. "'But beggars'—you know the old adage."

"Of course I know. But what possible application can it have at this moment?"

"Only this; I should like to name the date of my next visit to Red Berry Roads."

"If you have any choice of times, you certainly are the one to name it. Of course there can never be a time or season when the latch-key is not open to you."

"Yes; I do know! I want to come again when your dozen have their week. I have never forgotten ours at Amoury Roost so long ago—with your pets. It was immense!"

"I remember that visit distinctly. But all the fun just grazed the edge of a tragedy when somebody, very rash and very heroic, rushed out into the highway, and snatched a small, sun-browned biped, crooning in the hot sand, blissfully unconscious of his peril, from under the horse's feet."

Dorothy laughed a little nervously. "It was very rash, I know; but it saved his little bones, and harmed nobody's bigger ones. Now, about the dozen, Mr. Amoury?"

"My dear child, come and see! They are a bouncing set now—boys and girls—straggling up through their teens. Their manners—between four walls—have rather evolved; but set them down in a field or in the woods, and screechings and war-whoops assert the original savage."

Dorothy's eyes sparkled. "Oh, that is refreshing! My sympathies are all with your dozen. I am conscious of a fibre which thrills with fellow-feeling."

John Amoury glanced at the girl standing by his side in the flower of her girlhood. His heart yearned over her with a great, manly tenderness. What destiny, he asked himself, awaited the young creature, so careless and glad and confident? When the girl's nature should unfold into the woman's, when the great decision came on which all her future was staked, would she, so ten-

derly shielded, so carefully reared, choose wisely for herself? They had paused for a moment while they looked out into the darks and lights of the wide stillness.

A scene in the drawing-room at Amoury Roost suddenly recurred to him. He saw Dorothy cross the threshold, and a tall, handsome young fellow turn white and dazed and dumb at the entrance of that fair slip of a girl.

"Dorothy," he asked, as they turned from the piazza corner and resumed their walk, "do you know what has become of Tom's chum — that young Fallowes?"

His wife behind him was just approaching the same subject with Tom Draycott; but by slower methods and with vastly more tact.

"What in the world has made you think of him now?"

The surprise in her tone put John Amoury on his guard.

"What bungling work I have made of it!" he soliloquized. "Evelyn would have done it so much more adroitly!" But he proved himself equal to the occasion.

"It must have been our talk just now. You know he ran across Tom at Red Berry Roads and stayed with us a day or two. A fine fellow, I thought."

"Tom certainly thinks so. But really, I have not seen him since that time. You know I was at Smith College during Tom's last two years at Harvard. Mr. Fallowes's uncle died immediately after his nephew's graduation; he has been West ever since, I believe. Tom says he does not write often, and fancies there was some trouble in money matters. It seems to me there always is when anybody dies! But Tom thinks more of Philip Fallowes than any of his classmates."

If the memory of those two young moonlit walks came up to Dorothy Draycott now, it was in no atmosphere of romance. Young Fallowes was still to her "a fine fellow, her brother's friend." Six years is a long time in a girl's life, and they had rather dimmed his personality to her memory.

Mr. and Mrs. Draycott came out on the piazza, and there was a new grouping of partners. In the talk which followed there were pauses, even long silences, when the heart of the night seemed to draw them to itself.

When, in the late evening, they were all once more gathered in the library, Mrs. Amoury said: "There comes a time when there are no more birds to sing in the mornings around Amoury Roost, and the last flower has blossomed by the roadside, and then John says: 'The time has come again for Red Knolls.' You should hear the tone in which he says that!"

And Mrs. Draycott rejoined: "This morning Donald said to me, 'We have had many friends, Grace, dear and welcome at the long feast of the year; but we have kept the best wine until now. John and Evelyn are with us to-day.'"

Before the evening closed, Mr. Draycott made a confession. "I wrote aunty Dayles a letter last week which I kept even from you, Grace, until events should ultimate. I heard from her to-day, and the upshot of it all is she has agreed to come to Red Knolls for the holidays."

A chorus from delighted voices followed this announcement.

"I want another of that little woman's stories to take across seas with me," remarked John Amoury.

IV

HOW ONE FATHER TALKED TO HIS SON ABOUT BUSINESS

THE story I am trying to tell you must turn backward now to a talk which Tom Draycott had with his father, about a month after the young man's graduation.

This talk, which formed a crisis in his career, took place one evening after dinner, when the two happened to be alone in the library, with a prospect of some uninterrupted hours. It was by no means a sudden impulse on the part of the elder man. He had looked forward to it, more or less, for years. The talk opened with a jest. That was apt to be the case with Donald Draycott when any serious matter was pending.

"Tom," breaking out suddenly into the silence, as the speaker looked up from the paper which had apparently absorbed his attention for some time, "pick up your long self, sir, from that lounge where you have been lolling for the last hour. What right has a fellow with shoulders of your girth and muscles like whipcords, to spend his time like an old Turk, stretched luxuriously on his divan!"

"If my bones were supine, my brains were astir," exclaimed Tom, as he tossed down a magazine and vaulted to his feet. "I have been deep in a paper on 'Some Tough Problems of our own Decade.' It is a clever article—sets a fellow to thinking."

The young Draycotts had been brought up in an at-

mosphere of great freedom of thought and speech with their parents. The keen sense of humor—strong in every member of the family—played much around the talk,—even in its serious moods. In such affectionate intimacy, the youngsters often had their jokes over parental habits and idiosyncrasies. All this might have scandalized parents of a more rigid temper.

“Well, sit down here.” Donald Draycott pointed to a chair opposite his own. “Your magazine article may be well enough, but I want to stir up your thoughts now with problems of a more personal nature.”

“I am ready, sir.” Tom sat a little more erect; he had an instinct of what was coming; he had scented it in the air for weeks,—the more keenly, perhaps, because he and his father had religiously avoided all allusion to the subject.

“Well, we won’t waste time beating about the bush.” The voice of the elder took the deep, decided key which was always impressive. “The time is at hand for you to settle the most momentous question—in many aspects—of your life.”

“I understand, pater. You mean the career I am going to choose for myself,—the lines of work, in short, on which I shall elect to expend any native faculties and forces I may possess.”

“That is it precisely. There you sit—you big, strapping fellow—making me feel, every time I look at you, I ought, by good rights, to be an old man. But there is no possibility of setting you back a dozen years, as I should like to do with both you and Dollikins. You are getting on fast with your twenty-second year, and you have graduated from Harvard; and you have to look the next thing—a very big thing—in the face.”

"I never said this before, papa," said Tom, very gravely this time; "but I want to make a clean breast of it just here. I might have come out with a more brilliant record if I had put my full strength into the University work. I should be sorry to feel I had disappointed you there."

"You need never feel it, my boy," responded Donald Draycott with affectionate earnestness. "I was quite satisfied—even more—with the result. I suppose every conscientious man has your feeling when he looks back at the close of his University career. Your father did certainly. But many a fellow who stood at the top of his class has left the highest watermark of his life there. You may be content with your past. The question we are to deal with now concerns your future."

"It is a question I have been debating with myself a good deal since Class Day. It seemed so far off before—a question I could put off indefinitely."

"Yes; I understand." The elder man shot a glance of kindly perception at his son. "But something has happened recently which brings us face to face with the question at this time."

"What was it?" The monosyllables were sharp with interest.

Donald Draycott had, from this point, the talk for a long while to himself. He related at length to his son that he had received a call, a few days before, from the senior member of the banking firm with which his own house had long held intimate business relations. The firm was one of the oldest, most conservative in Boston. It had weathered all the financial crises of the century. It had a well-deserved reputation in the business world for solidity and integrity. The banker had, after a few

preliminaries, explained the object of his call. He had met young Draycott,—sometimes at the bank, sometimes at his father's office. He was a shrewd reader of men. Tom had, it appeared, made a favorable impression. As the result of the long interview, the elder Draycott had received a letter offering his son a position in the old banking-house. It was a fine offer; one which, if Tom concluded to accept it, and put all his forces into the business, would probably lead, in time, to a partnership and a fortune.

“It is my duty to set all these things before you, Tom,” continued his father, “in the clearest lights. There are hundreds of richer fathers than yours to-day in Boston who would jump at such a chance for their sons. This senior partner is my friend; he is inclined, for several reasons, to be yours; his interest and regard would, if you entered his firm, be a great point in your favor. You understand perfectly that I shall not be able to leave you what the world regards a great fortune. It has never been my aim to do that. But this is, after all, a question you must decide for yourself. No man—no affection—can do it wisely for you. You must decide it, too, with your eyes open; with a clear comprehension of the value which most men, in this very material age, set upon wealth; that it seems to them the supreme good—the dazzling goal—for which they are ready to make any effort, to sacrifice—too often—soul and body.”

“But not the man I have known longest and most intimately,” responded Tom; and now the glance which he, in turn, shot at his father was full of reverent affection.

“God forbid—oh, God forbid!” ejaculated the elder

man fervently. "But," he resumed, after a few moments' silence, "it has never been my purpose to under-rate all that wealth includes of power, opportunity, and high place. You know what these mean; I do not wish you to put the prospect—I might almost say, the certainty—of acquiring a fortune away from you without a full comprehension of what you are doing. It is a life question we are discussing now."

"I see." Tom appeared to be studying the patterns on the library rug. His father thought he had seldom seen his face so serious. "This seems to me," the younger continued, after a prolonged pause, "a matter in which nature—one's inborn aptitudes and original bent—should have the last word. A man ought to be sure—if he can—where the germinal instincts point; the sort of work, in short, in which he can put the best and utmost of himself."

"Most certainly! A mistake here would be irretrievable. It would mean going more or less handicapped through life. It is fair to suppose the Power that started us here had some purpose in doing it, and arranged the lines on which we should best carry out the original intention."

"That means I ought to make sure whether I was primarily cut out for a business man."

"It means that, first and last. If you choose a business life, go ahead, heart and soul! You will have chosen what you can make a noble career. Make money too—if you can! But, from the outset, regard your work from its ideal side! The larger the fortune, the better, so that it fertilizes many lives beside your own. But don't go into business merely and solely to make money, because it seems the grandest thing in the world to be

a rich man. If you do, you will come out at last—in all the real values—a poor one.”

“This isn’t the sort of talk, I imagine, one would be likely to hear on the great Exchanges of the world!” Tom spoke in a dry tone.

“No; the more reason that you should hear it now! But your choice is not shut up to the banker’s office. There are the professions, for instance.”

“I have no tastes in the medical line, and as for the clerical—great heavens, pater! I must be a hundred times better man than I am to think of that!”

“Well, is there possibly an inchoate lawyer in you?”

It was, perhaps, less the question than the tone which made Tom turn promptly on his father: “Have you ever thought that, sir?”

“I confess the idea has sometimes struck me when I have heard you—you young rascal!—handle an argument. Have you yourself ever given it a serious thought?”

“Yes and no. Of course I understood that the time would come for me to choose my place and work in the world, and buckle down to them. But I could always afford to put them off. Your banker’s offer seems to have precipitated matters.”

“If you decided to-night, I should hardly accept your choice as final.”

Tom rose now, squaring his shoulders and drawing a deep breath. “Of course there are lots of other things,” he said; “but I have a feeling that this last hour’s talk has brought matters to a very practical issue.” He paused a moment, walked over to the mantel, leaned an arm on it, faced his father, and spoke in a quiet, decided

voice. "Father, it is going to be your banker's offer or a lawyer's brief with me!"

"You think so? Well, having given the business side a fair recognition, it is only right the law should have its turn now. No words can adequately represent what it symbolizes. Think how infinitely noble is the idea of a profession which means 'the building-up of a sense of justice in the lives and hearts of men!' If you choose the law, let it enlist all your powers and enthusiasms! Be jealous for the honor of your profession! Of course there will be the detail and drudgery,—those are inevitable in any life-work,—but its ideal side is there also—never lose sight of that!"

"You make me feel that you deserve a better son than I am. I may never be much of a credit to you, father."

Something in Tom's tone showed these words came from his heart.

Donald Draycott looked at his son as he stood before him, one elbow resting on the corner of the mantel, and his figure drawn to his full height. Any father might have felt a thrill of pride in that manly, large-limbed youth, but the response to Tom's speech came only after a few moments' silence.

"I will say nothing about the sort of son I may deserve, but there is certainly one thing my children have reason to thank me for."

"What may that be?"

"For the mother I gave them!"

"Oh, yes! The very best mother in the world!" subjoined Tom fervently.

"It seems to me even that cannot be more than the truth," added Donald Draycott with a tender vibration in his voice. "Still," and his own humorous smile gave

a revealing gleam to his face, "I hope there are millions of husbands who to-night would say the same thing of their own wives! I, too, have known many noble and lovely women; but, when it comes to your mother—well"—he broke off suddenly—"a man cannot always say what he knows—what he feels—even to his own son."

"Dear little mater!" Tom's laugh was amused only on the surface. "How she would protest if she were to hear you say all that!"

Not long afterward Tom was speaking very earnestly. "This talk has made me feel ten years older than I did when we sat down to breakfast this morning!"

"That is always the case when a man comes to looking the most serious responsibilities of life in the face; but you are not going to shirk things, Tom, because you have had such a free and easy-going life of it so far?"

"I certainly don't intend to, sir." Tom's jaws settled into the resolute Draycott line.

"And remember however venerable you may happen to feel at this moment,—and the most careless, inconsequent youth has its sane and serious moods,—all your life lies before you! You will barely get well into the harness with the opening of the next century! Think of that! Your real work awaits you there. And what a century it is going to be! It takes no prophet's vision, no statesman's prescience, to see that it will have enormous problems to solve, tremendous burdens to bear, almost superhuman tasks to achieve. What great tests, what grand opportunities, are awaiting the young fellows who stand on the threshold of manhood in this decade which is wheeling us so fast out of the nineteenth century! Sometimes I seem to feel in the air a presage of the coming tumult, to catch the clamor of voices, the

sounds of the fray! For that next century will not, by any means, be smooth sailing for those who are in the current of things. It is going to be the field of a mighty struggle, political, social, moral. It will try men's souls. But to those who listen wisely, the voices which float down are not all of strife and tumult. Sometimes I seem to catch glad pæans of triumph, and I feel, I know, that they break from the heart of a century, which has achieved many a glorious task, which has done God's work in His world, and gained larger hope, freedom, blessedness, for humanity."

"I see what mamma means when she insists that you have a deep vein of enthusiasm—a gift of eloquent expression which, under stimulating circumstances, would have developed you into an orator who would have won his laurels."

"Nonsense." There was a flash of amusement in Donald Draycott's eyes. "Your mother's opinion is not altogether to be relied on when it comes to an estimate of her husband."

"At any rate, you have just afforded proof that her instincts were not at fault in one case. But after you have carried me off into your finer ether and almost taken my breath away with your visions and prophecies, I want to come down to an inexorable fact or two. You say—and very eloquently—how my life-work will lie all before me when this century strikes its last hour. I shall then be approaching my thirtieth birthday—within five years of my meridian."

"For all that, Tom, the heft of your work will hold over to the next century. You will only get well into the traces by the end of this. There is many a hale, hearty man breathing the air of this summer night who

is older than you will be if you see—to keep to your metaphor—the meridian line of the next century. If you should, and look back and remember this night, and have played your part manfully, you will have learned what are the essential things—the things to live and die for.”

“A fellow ought to be sure he was built of tough material if he expects to hold on to his eightieth birthday, which I shall be mighty near doing when I see the new year of our Lord nineteen hundred and fifty.”

Both the men laughed. Had you caught the sound of their mirth, you would have been puzzled to say which was the elder.

Indeed, had you looked on the two as they sat together in the waning summer evening, you would have been slow to believe that the tall, splendid-built youth, stretching his length now in the easy-chair on one side of the table, could be the son of the man sitting at the other.

The likeness between the men was not very pronounced, though Tom had inherited the Draycott height and build as well as certain strong facial lines. But Donald Draycott looked like a man in the prime of his years—one whom a stranger might easily take for the brother of his boy. He was close on fifty, yet there was only a glimmer of gray in his thick mustache and about his temples; he had the broad chest, the straight, strong shoulders of his race; his face had the powerful charm of character and expression, his color-tone was darker than his son's, and the bright kindliness of his eyes won the gazer at once, but those deep eyes had also flashes of indignation which one seeing was not likely to forget.

At the close of that evening's talk the father advised

his son to take a month for considering the question they had been debating.

One evening at the end of that time, Tom followed his father into the library and said simply, "I have decided, father."

The elder man put down his paper. Not a muscle of his face moved. "Which is it to be, Tom, business or the bar?"

"The bar."

A real joy leaped in the father's eyes; he grasped his son's hand. "I congratulate you, Tom, with all my heart."

"Yet in all these weeks you have not, by word or look, thrown a feather's weight—either way—into the scale."

"No; how could I? It was a question for you to decide. Now you have done so, I can tell you how gratified I am. You have confirmed my deepest convictions. I have been observing you for years with reference to this very question which I foresaw was sure some time to come up between us. I have felt your innate tendencies were intellectual rather than—in any form—commercial. I believe you have chosen the most congenial sphere, the one best calculated to unfold your highest possibilities. Now, once more, go ahead!"

"That is what I have been admonishing myself to do."

"And you will never cast a backward glance towards—"

"The fleshpots of Egypt. I am no stoic, but I do not believe I shall spend my life hankering after them."

"They may not prove so numerous or so tempting as they appear. We are in a time of transition. Despite our material trend and our millionaires, our wealth does

not appear to have the old, solid foundations. New things are abroad in the air to-day. No living man has prescience to detect what limitations and diversions the capital of this generation may undergo in the next."

"Well, in any case," rejoined Tom gayly, "I shall not have one of the big fortunes to go down in the general scramble."

"No; it has always been my aim to secure my children some sources of happiness which money cannot provide or take away."

"Dear old pater! You have done your part for us splendidly!" and Tom, with a sudden impulse of grateful affection, laid his hand on his father's shoulder.

That autumn Tom Draycott entered the Harvard Law School.

V

MRS. NABBY DAYLES

ONE evening, a week after Mr. and Mrs. Amoury's arrival, the household was gathered together at Red Knolls. Mrs. Dayles had appeared only the day before. She had brought her soft, quiet presence and the smile which looked out of her dark, tender eyes. It seemed as though a gracious spirit had stolen in among them, and breathed its benediction on the air.

A moment's silence fell on the buzz of bright voices in the library, warm with evening lights and leaping hearth-fire. John Amoury, sitting near his host, seized the pause for which he had been on the watch.

"We want one of your stories to-night, aunty Dayles! They have haunted Amoury Roost ever since you visited it. I am sure the general voice will approve me."

The heaven of the Indian summer had lingered — more or less — through these days; but a change was coming at last. Low winds were fretting in the shrubberies outside. The stars looked with dim, shy faces between gray, herding clouds. There was a bitter chill — the breath of the coming winter — in the air.

There was an animated chorus of assent to John Amoury's proposition, a swift adjustment of the small group to a listening attitude. Mrs. Dayles sat near the fireplace in a low arm-chair, in which her small, straight

figure was half swallowed up. These six years had hardly touched her. The snowflakes were, perhaps, a little thicker in her dark hair. Her eyes went over the group with a half-amused, half-deprecatory look. "I can't think of anything which would be likely to interest you," she said, speaking half to herself. "What kind of a story do you want, my dear people?"

"Let me offer one suggestion," interposed Tom Draycott. "We want a story right out of your own experience — something in which you have lived and felt and acted a chief part. Those about other people are interesting, but the kind I mean go straight as an arrow to the mark."

"You hear what Tom says," added his father. "I am sure we all endorse it."

"But I have never done any great thing — the sort that makes a story, you know," returned the soft, half-expostulating voice. "You forget in what quiet, shaded places my life has lain."

"It went out of them once into a great glare and strife. You remember, Dollikins, those stories aunty Dayles used to tell us about the war when we were kids at Cherry Farms?"

"Remember! I should think!"

"Well," supplemented Mrs. Amoury, "that is what we want to-night — one of your war-stories! Only how such a quiet, soft-spoken little woman ever brought herself to go to the war!"

"You can hardly call it that, Mrs. Amoury. I only went to the hospitals. It came about very naturally. Day after day news would be brought us of the great battles, and the sufferings of our troops in field and in camp. One after another brave fellow would come

home on furlough, who had gone out full of youth and strength and courage to do his share for his country; and some would be battered with wounds, and others all broken-up with terrible exposure and marches and hardships. At last I said to my husband: 'Benjamin, I can't stand this any longer! The crops are all in. You and the children will be in good hands now aunt Jerushy has come on for the winter. I'm goin' to set out to do what I can for those poor, sufferin', homesick fellows in the army!'

"Benjamin was a man of few words; he looked at me at first as if he thought I had gone stark mad. At last he said, 'If it comes to a question between you and me, of who goes to the war, I am the one to do that.'

"'But you know what the doctor said,' I answered, 'about your bein' a dead man in less than three months if you set out for the battle-field. It isn't your call, Benjamin, and our boys are too young.'

"Then he cried sharply: 'I can't give you up, Nabby. I can't let you go down there into that rough life—among those dreadful scenes.'

"'Benjamin,' I said, 'other households all around us have sent their strength and flower to the war. Cherry Farms has no soldier to give for the country, only a woman for the hospitals!'

"That was the beginning of our talk. We had many afterward. It was hard on Benjamin; it wasn't easy for me; but a month later, I went down to Washington.

"It was just like entering a new world. It dazed me at first—all that noise and crowd and bustle—the long, bare, white wards, with their rows of beds, and the sick, wounded, and dying men. After a little while, though, I got pretty well used to it and went to work with a will.

There's no place to teach women what men really are — like a big hospital in war time. I've seen the tears running down many a brown-bearded face because I'd said a few kind, encouragin' words — such as I might to my little boys at home — or bathed some big, helpless man's temples, or brought him a cup of tea and tried to chirk him up in the way a woman can. In a little while they all began to seem like boys to me. I just made up my mind that men" — she went on half to herself — "the proudest and grandest of 'em — get right down to their hearts and feelin's, are only a kind of big children after all."

The masculine portion of her audience burst into a roar of laughter. When this had partially subsided, the two wives affirmed that Mrs. Dayles was wholly in the right. Dorothy gravely rejoined that "wives must answer for their husbands. So far as her experience went with one specimen of the sex whom she had known intimately all her life, no truer word had ever been spoken."

Then Donald Draycott turned to his friend. "It is instructive, John Amoury," he said, "if not flattering, to get at the precise way in which our womankind regard us!"

Aunty, or naunty Dayles, as they still oftenest called her at Red Knolls, had joined in the laugh. When the silence fell again, she said, in a slow, hesitant voice: "You want a story. So many strange things happened every day."

"It is my turn to suggest," remarked Mrs. Draycott. "Won't you tell us the incident you recall oftenest — which you would be likely to remember, though all the others had vanished?"

There was a little silence. The small group watched the face under the frost-touched hair grow very serious. They knew some memory had started into vivid life.

"It is a story," she began in a half-shy, half-appealing tone, "which I never told to any one but Benjamin. It is not one you will laugh at, my dear friends."

"But we have had the laugh already," said Mrs. Draycott.

After that Mrs. Dayles had the talking to herself. "I had been about three months in the hospital. By that time I had got pretty well used to the life and the work. This last meant a good many different things for me, — serving in the wards, helping the doctors and nurses when they got into tight places, preparing broths and bandages for the sick men — and what, with one thing and another, never finding time hang heavy on my hands.

"That day we were busy as bees. A fresh batch of men had been brought in. They had come up on the river from the camp-hospitals, and the poor fellows were in a sorry plight, with wounds and fevers and the hardships they had suffered. We filled the wards and did all we could to make them comfortable, and a mighty pleasant change it must have been from the boats and the camp-hospitals.

"There were so many of 'em that surgeons and cooks and nurses had to be spry that day. I was going about in one of the wards, serving cordials to the men, when suddenly a face among all the strange, pale faces on those cots struck me in a curious way. It was a man's — still young and handsome, though it was ghastly white, and there were great black hollows under the closed eyes. I can see them now as I see you all this

minute," continued aunty Dayles, looking at her small audience, and yet seeming to gaze at something beyond it. "The blue veins stood out sharp from the thin temples. The face, with its light, thick brown beard and hair, had a look of much native power and force. It was very sad, too, and as I gazed, I knew somehow that the sadness was not all for the pain. His breath came slow and hard, and he moaned in his sleep. My heart ached for him. It was such a strong, proud young manhood that lay feeble and wrecked before me. Did anybody — I wondered — wait, longing and listening for the foot-step and the voice they would never hear again?

"A sunbeam broke suddenly across his pillow: he opened his eyes and looked at me. We gazed at each other and neither said a word. Then the doctor came for me in a hurry.

"The next day when I was busy over the broths and beef-tea, one of the surgeons came to the door and beckoned to me. I went out into the hall.

"‘There’s a fellow in the next ward,’ he said, ‘who has been asking for you. He was brought up yesterday with the others. At least, I fancy it was you he was after.’

"‘What makes you think so?’ I asked.

"‘Because he wanted the little woman with the mother eyes. I can think of nobody here who answers that description quite as well as yourself, Mrs. Dayles,’ he said with a smile.

"It was curious — I had been seeing so many strange faces in the last twenty-four hours, — but I knew in an instant whom he meant.

"‘Then I will go right off,’ I answered, and was turning away when he stopped me. ‘Perhaps I ought to

tell you before you go that he is one of the rebs — a devil of a fighter, too !’

“At those words I felt myself grow hard all over. I had never seen a rebel in my life. What I had seen was our young boys setting out brave and strong for the war, while the mothers stayed at home, the waiting and dreading eating their very hearts out. I had had all the long agony of the war right before my eyes day and night, in that Washington hospital. I didn’t talk much about it, but I loved my land with a great love and my soul was full of bitterness toward the men who were striking at her life. I had fancied they must be a kind of savages, that they couldn’t look or speak like our own people. I spoke out sharply. ‘Oh, I can’t go to a rebel — I can’t! You must get somebody else!’

“‘All right, Mrs. Dayles,’ the doctor said. ‘The poor fellow can’t hold out long anyhow, so perhaps it won’t make much difference; but I’m certain it was you he wanted.’

“The doctor hurried away, and I went back to my work. But things wouldn’t go right. All the time something kept saying to me, ‘Nabby Dayles, you know it was *you* he wanted — a dying man — all alone in a hospital! It will haunt you the rest of your life if you don’t go now.’

“At last I put down my work and started for the ward. On my way I met the surgeon. ‘Doctor, I’m goin’,’ I said.

“He looked at me a moment with his shrewd smile. ‘I expected it, Mrs. Dayles,’ he answered.

“When I reached the sick man, I knew the doctor was right; he couldn’t hold out much longer.

“‘Did you want to speak to me, sir?’ I tried to say

it kindly, seeing him in that case; but I had seen our own soldiers look just like that; I couldn't help remembering.

"He didn't speak at first; he kept his eyes on me. They were bigger and sadder than before. I began to think he must know how I was feeling about him.

"‘Yes,’ he said at last, in a strained, hollow voice. ‘It was you I wanted. I saw you standing at the foot of the bed last night. There was a look in your eyes—I have been thinking ever since I would be glad to have such a look the last thing I could carry out of the world. It might follow me a little way into the dark.’

"When he said that, in such a hopeless way, in such a slow, hollow voice, all the hardness melted right out of me. I bent over him and laid my hand on his. ‘Is there anything I can do for you, my friend?’ I asked.

"‘There is nothing—thank you.’ He spoke in the same quiet, hopeless tone. But for all that I bathed his temples and arranged his pillows, and all the time he kept that bright, searching, hopeless gaze on my face. I knew at last there was something he wanted to tell me, that he could not die in peace unless he did it.

"At last he spoke. ‘I have seen my mother—my poor, dead mother—with just that look in her eyes, sometimes. It was that made me send for you.’

"‘And now,’ I said, ‘I have come. If there is anything you want to tell me, any message you would like sent to another, you may trust me as you would trust her.’

"‘I am sure of that,’ he answered; ‘but there is no message. My own family are all dead, and my nearest kin are angered and estranged.’ His white lips quivered a moment; then he said: ‘I have not been a good man. I broke my mother’s heart.’

"I saw what the trouble was now — a great pain and remorse, a world of dark memories and regrets struggling in his soul. I could think of no words to help or comfort him.

"But he must have read in my eyes all that I felt; for in a few moments he put out his hand and clasped mine, and began to talk of his life. He had been an only son: his father had died when he was a mere boy; his mother had adored and indulged him as widowed mothers are apt to their only sons; he had followed his own will and gone the wild ways of careless, headstrong youth, and at last had fallen on evil days, among vicious companions; he drank, he gambled — it was the story of the prodigal son over again.

"I tried to check him here, for every word had been uttered with a hollow voice and gasping breath. 'It hurts you to tell me all this,' I said. 'If it would do you any good, I would listen; but I want to help you in some better way than that.'

"'I know you do,' and he held my hand tighter. 'It is not the kind of story to tell you, but there was nobody else.'

"When I heard him say that with the despairing look and appealing eyes, my heart yearned over him with an unutterable pity. Half an hour ago we had never exchanged a word — he had fought against my people — I did not even know his name, yet in his last strait he had turned to me, and my heart was answering him as if he had been my own boy!

"I think he must have felt this; for after he had looked at me a minute or two, he said, in those hollow, struggling tones, 'It isn't that I'm afraid — I can die like a man — as I would on the battle-field when the

time came; but it is the thought of that wasted, ruined life which lies behind me, and of what a true, pure, noble thing God meant it to be. O little woman, standing there with your pitying eyes, it is that life that I have got to carry with me out into the dark! There is no help for it!’

“In the silence I could not think of a word to say. It seemed to me I would have laid down my life joyfully to have helped him; but all the blessed words and promises with which we comfort ourselves and others in life’s hardest straits, failed me then. For a minute a great darkness grew all around me; I could only see those two big, hopeless eyes staring at me — at *me* — standing there by the low cot without a word to say, and I knew each moment the great tide was bearing him farther away.

“Then the words came — I don’t know where or how, or that I had ever thought of them before, but I heard them then, clear and sweet and solemn. In all those weeks at the hospital I had learned a good deal of the soldiers’ talk. I knew what chain-guard and picket-guard and a good many other army terms meant as well as though I had been on long marches too.

“Then the speech came of itself! I bent over him, so that he should not lose one word. ‘No!’ I said. ‘I stand here and tell you “No” a thousand times. When you and death go out together, you will carry something beside that wronged, wasted, ruined life of yours — you will carry your repentance, as I have seen it in your eyes. “*The Lord is thy Rereward!*”’

“That was the Word which had come to me — which I spoke!

“The soldier knew, as every man in the army did, what the rear-guard meant — what care and watch and

safety in the long marches, what succor and security if the enemy was at hand!

"In a moment a flash — a light — had come into his face. There was a little, gasping cry. I cannot describe it, but I knew then that my words had gone straight to the heart of his pain and despair. A new life and hope crept into his eyes. It was like the daylight, which grows in the east until the darkness is all gone. I trembled lest he should die of the sudden surprise and change.

"Afterward he spoke. 'I see what you mean! I believe it is true, *true*, TRUE!' There was such a new life in his voice!

"Later he said other things. I had to lean close to catch the words; but I shall remember them, and the dying look and tones, until it comes my turn to go and find out how much we do remember, on the great Other Side, of the things which happened here!

"At last he dropped off into a sleep, peaceful and sweet as a child's. There was a child's peace in his face, too!

"Then the doctor came for me.

"As I followed him out into the ward, my heart was like one of my own cherry-trees full of singing orioles in blossoming-time. I had spoken the right words in the sorest human need. It seemed to me I could have gone out and sent them shouting and rejoicing over all the world, like that old Christmas song of the Shepherds! I wanted to breathe them into every heart that was darkened and harrowed with memories and remorse. I, too, had entered into all the infinite meanings of the words, — their sweetness of consolation, their blessedness of healing, their preciousness of hope. I knew then they

were words to live or to die by: 'THE LORD IS THY REREWARD!'

"Late that night the doctor called me. 'You must come at once,' he said, 'or it will be too late!'

"When I reached the soldier's cot, he knew me. I took his cold hand in mine. The smile on his face was peaceful as a baby's when it wakes up and sees its mother bending over the cradle. His lips moved a little. I bent down close to him. 'There is a great shining behind — where all the dark was!' he whispered. Then he repeated once more the words I had brought him. They were the last he ever said. I sometimes wonder if they were the first he spoke again."

The next day Mr. and Mrs. Amoury sailed on the *Cephalonia*.

VI

WHETHER DAISY ROSS FORGOT

"DID you speak to me, Dakie?"

"Certainly I did — three times! What a brown study you are in, Daisy!"

There was a great contrast in the voices. The first had the clear soprano sweetness of childhood; the other was full of young masculine strength, keyed to some playfulness now, like that one uses to small, tender things or to some creature one is fond of.

Dake Cramley and Daisy Ross were sitting together in the small, neatly furnished room at the head of the first flight of stairs in a large, substantial house — one of a block of brown-stone façades fronting a grassy area in a quiet, pleasant street at the South End. This apartment had been reserved as a sitting-room for the pair by Mrs. Jemima Bray — the mistress of the house. It was the habit of the two to come here after dinner and have their evening talks, as they had formerly done in Mrs. Bray's dingy little room at the North End.

It is more than six years now since Dake Cramley carried the small, clinging, scared creature in his arms over the ancient threshold. Daisy was then hardly past infancy, and Dake was still at an age when life may prove plastic to new influences and environment.

Less than two years after that event, the dwelling at the North End, which had preserved, through all its later

shabbiness, a certain air of ancient dignity, succumbed to fate. A company of capitalists purchased the site, which was occupied in an incredibly short period by a tall, rather garish-looking business block. This event had proved the turning-point in Mrs. Bray's fortunes. She owed this, and never lost sight of the obligation, to Dake Cramley — the youth whose shabby exterior had occasioned her secret misgivings before she consented to give him a seat at her crowded table and an attic lodging under her roof, and to the homeless little waif he had brought to her a month later, and who had walked straight into her heart.

Of course the Draycotts now learned the fate which was impending over the North End boarding-house. A number of conferences took place between a small group of people, including the Amouries and the head of the great manufacturing house where Dake Cramley was employed, and the result was that Mrs. Bray had a powerful backing, by means of which a new house and mostly new furnishings were secured at the South End.

Mrs. Jemima Bray rose to the occasion. In her new and agreeable environment her native New England faculty asserted itself, and surprised her friends by the manner in which she met the requirements of her novel position as mistress of a house smarter than anything to which her loftiest imagination had ever aspired.

Dake Cramley exchanged his small stuffy attic for a sunny back chamber, and Daisy was installed, to quote Mrs. Bray, "in the puttiest little nest of a room ever mortal head laid itself down in." It had white rugs and soft lace draperies and tasteful furnishings in blue and white — all of which had been contributed and arranged by Dorothy Draycott.

Daisy came over to Dake's side now and stood beside him with just a shade of wistfulness in her face. She looked not far — either way — from her tenth birthday. Her eyes still held the gentian's blue in their dark brightness. The dandelion seemed to have spilled its own May-gold among the rings of hair which meshed themselves around her temples, and clung in her neck. People still stopped to gaze at her on the street as they had done in those long-ago summer evenings when she first walked in the Public Garden, her little hand clasped in Dake Cramley's.

"Maybe I was in the least bit of a brown study," said the voice in its clear, soft key. It struck him there was a touch of reserve in her manner, a slight effort in the lifting of those golden-lashed lids. He knew Daisy like a book.

"Well, am I not to know all about it?" tone and look half playful, half earnest. "I shall be jealous of your brown studies if I am not to share them."

A burst of sweet laughter filled the room. "O Dakie, what a very odd thing to be jealous of!"

"Perhaps; but men are very odd creatures, Daisy. They are apt to be jealous and curious too."

"They are?" taking him half seriously and seating herself in a low, pretty cretonne-cushioned chair which had been sent her last year, a Christmas gift from Red Knolls. "I never supposed such things of them."

"Why not?" hiding a smile under his dark mustache.

"I don't know." She twisted her small fingers together meditatively. "I suppose it must be because men are so big and strong. One wouldn't think they could have any such small feelings."

"Small feelings don't depend on size or strength.

Here I sit, a case in point! I am a rather big fellow, as you know, and I can beat most men when it comes to handling a heavy weight; but I am being devoured by what you call 'such small feelings,' at this very moment."

Daisy caught a twinkle in the black eyes which neutralized the solemn tones.

"You are making fun of me, Dakie."

"A little, but I will be very serious and honest now. I want to know what all that 'brown study' was about."

Daisy's lids drooped. There was a little tremulousness about her mouth. Dake watched her as one watches the thing which is tenderest and dearest in the world. She sat before him in her dress of a warm claret tint, the small fingers unconsciously twisting themselves together. It was one of her habits, which he knew so well. He never imagined that his own dark color and manly strength made an effective contrast with the white softness and the early bloom. People were often puzzled about the relationship between the pair. Dake had too youthful an aspect to be the father of that fair child; he might be an older brother, only there was not the faintest family likeness between the two.

Daisy looked up suddenly. "It was such a little thing!" she faltered. "Just something that happened to-day."

"Daisy, has anybody been saying — doing — anything to trouble you?"

The child started and stared in his face. His tone had been almost fierce.

"Nobody has. It was all my fault, my foolishness." Her tone and manner were those of a little woman.

Dake leaned over and took the soft hand in his big one. "Tell me, Daisy," he said.

"It happened to-day at school. One of the girls —

Bessie Leigh — she's ever so nice — had a birthday. Our teacher, Miss Sewall, gave her a present, in the prettiest little white satin box you ever saw. The present was a pair of silver bracelets. They were just lovely! Bessie showed them to me after school and Miss Sewall looked on and smiled. At last she called me to her and said: 'Now, Daisy dear, you shall have a present, too, on your next birthday. When will that be?'

"I didn't know, you see; I had never thought of it before. At last I stammered out, 'Nobody ever told me!'

"'Don't know your birthday, Daisy!' Miss Sewall said. And then she stared at me, and Bessie heard, — she was standing by, — and then she looked from one to the other, and at last I thought she looked sorrowful at me.

"Pretty soon Miss Sewall called me to her, and she kissed me and said: 'Never mind, Daisy! Little girls can have presents just the same, you know, if they don't have birthdays.'

"But all the way home I kept thinking about it, Dakie, and it seemed such a sad thing not to have a birthday and keep it like other little girls. I shall never know — never —" a great sob choked her.

Dake had never seen her so grieved before. He lifted her from the chair and drew her close to him.

"You shall have a birthday too, Daisy! We will get one up for you and make a huge frolic of it. Won't that be — jolly?"

He drew out his handkerchief and wiped her eyes.

In a few moments Daisy stopped crying. Perhaps something in Dake's look or voice made her do this.

"Yes; it will be very jolly," she said, nestling up to him and her own smile came out on her lips and in her

eyes. "When you think of all the things I've got," continued the soft, eager voice, "it's very wicked to mind so much about birthdays. There is this home—yours and mine together—and then comes Red Knolls next and afterward Amoury Roost and Cherry Farms—the loveliest places in the world and the loveliest people in them! They have all said to me, 'This is your home, Daisy,—you must remember that,—all the same as though you were living here.'"

"Of course they have, and meant it too," responded Dake fervently. "They would carry you off quickly, too,—I am sure enough of that—only they don't want to take my little girl away from me!"

"And she doesn't want to go!" Here Daisy threw her arms about his neck and gave him a long hug.

That evening, after Daisy had gone to bed, Mrs. Bray came into the room for a talk with Dake Cramley—one of the old habits which had survived the migration from the North End. You would hardly have recognized her. The old, hunted look in her eyes had vanished. Her change of abode, her easier solution of the problem of ways and means, her smartened attire, were all factors in her improved appearance. The evening cap and gown in which she now presided at the head of her table were fresh and becoming.

Mrs. Jemima Bray still had her foibles, her prejudices, her inconsistencies; but beneath them, and behind her greatly outraged vernacular, throbbed warm and true her woman's heart.

Dake Cramley was sure of an interested and sympathetic listener when he confided to his landlady the incident which had taken place at school that morning.

The scene in the North End alley, and the miserable

year which preceded that, had — her friends tried to persuade themselves — faded from the child's memory. They had done all in their power to bring about a consummation so devoutly to be wished for. The first year after she came to them, it was evident the old memories were not always laid. Daisy would wake with cries and sobs of terror from her sleep, and it required all their efforts to soothe her; but, as time went on, these scenes became less frequent, and, at length, ceased altogether.

Daisy herself asked no questions about her infancy — had not, indeed, for years; she seemed satisfied with her friends' version of the past. Her father and mother, they told her, had died when she was a baby. The nurse, with whom she had been left in charge, also died suddenly, leaving no traces as to where she was taking her; or of many things which must have happened before she was brought to Mrs. Bray's.

“And a blessed hour it was, my darlin’,” continued the woman, touching lightly as possible on these details, while the child sat listening, silent, but with eyes riveted on her face, “when you came under this roof! I have told you — haven't I? — how Dick Cramley happened to come across you when you were out alone one day, and brought you here. Such a mite as you were at that time wouldn't be likely to remember things which happened ages and ages ago; and it's no use, besides bein' a sin, to go back and try to bring up harrowin' memories, instead of bein' happy in the present, and lettin' the past take care of itself, as Holy Scriptur' teaches; though I ain't got chapter and verse at my tongue's end this minute. Now, my dear, go and put on your new hat and we'll have a walk in the Public Garden, and see the red and yellow

tulips all a wonder o' blossomin'! You can tell Dakie all about 'em to-night when you and he have a basket o' ripe strawberries all by yourselves. I was bound you should have 'em when I found 'em in the market this mornin'."

Mrs. Bray may have had a dim consciousness that she was paraphrasing the Bible text, but she felt the circumstances justified a very liberal interpretation.

One spectre had, at times, haunted Daisy's two friends. Whenever it appeared before Mrs. Bray, she broke down in hysteric sobs and tremors, while Dake Cramley, in a less demonstrative fashion, grew white about the lips, and felt his strong young heart leap in blind alarm as a certain possibility suggested itself.

They were both aware that a considerable section of the North End must have been aroused by the way in which the child had been rescued from her tormentor. Those who had witnessed the dramatic scene — especially in its closing phases — formed a large crowd. These would be certain to relate the story to their friends. It would not be likely to lose anything in the telling.

Some villain — needy and desperate — among the listening groups might see his chance here: he might brood over the dark plot until it took form in action. "If he could learn," he might reason, "where the child was staying, he might keep watch, come across her in some unguarded moment, lure her to him, or seize and carry her off by main force, keep her in hiding for a while, manage in some secret way to communicate with her friends, who would be willing to come down with a round sum if she were restored to them!"

This remote possibility took strong hold of Mrs. Bray's imagination. She recalled the disappearance of little

Charlie Ross with all the attendant circumstances — that child-tragedy that is sure to live on, with all its inevitable aggregations, during the next century. The identity of names had an effect on Mrs. Bray: she succeeded in infecting Dake Cramley's strong nerves, more or less, with her fears. A strict watch was kept over Daisy's movements. Mrs. Bray experienced a sickening alarm if the child could not be accounted for at any moment. The misfortunes of her own life had inclined her to forebodings. Dake himself used to feel a happy sense of reassurance when the little golden-ringed head sprang forward, and the joyous cry of welcome greeted his return at night.

As time went on, these fears were gradually allayed. Daisy herself lived her happy life in absolute unconsciousness of them. Dake's friend, the policeman, whose beat included the North End alley, treated all such fears as absolutely groundless, and his conviction went far to reassure the others.

Even before the removal from the North End, Dorothy Draycott's representations had won Mrs. Bray's consent to Daisy's attending a kindergarten some distance from her home. The alarm about a possible kidnapping had not been shared at Red Knolls, though when Dake Cramley once broached the subject to him, Tom Draycott was wise enough not to treat it with ridicule. In deference, however, to her friends' feelings, it was arranged that a school-companion should call for Daisy and accompany her home. With the removal to the South End, the spectre disappeared.

During their talk that evening, Dake Cramley asked a question which rather startled Mrs. Bray.

"Have you ever thought Daisy might remember more

of her past, and of how she came to us, than we have imagined?"

"Land sakes! No, Mr. Dake. What can have put that idea into your head? She was such a child — a baby — you might say — at the time! Besides, she never asks a question."

"That is precisely the thing which has sometimes set me wondering." Dake absently bent a slender ivory paper-cutter which he had taken up from the table, until it seemed on the point of snapping. "Daisy has a remarkable memory; she is such a bright creature too! It would seem natural that she should sometimes be curious about things which happened before she came to us. It is her silence that puzzles me."

"That is just because she don't remember," answered Mrs. Bray decidedly. "She is runnin' over with life and happiness, and ain't got no time to go huntin' in the past. I know Daisy like a book. You may trust me. That child's forgot all about things, Mr. Dake."

"I devoutly hope you are right, Mrs. Bray. Indeed, I suppose you must be."

VII

WITH TOM DRAYCOTT AND DAKE CRAMLEY

DAKE CRAMLEY stood in the doorway.

Tom Draycott turned suddenly and saw the figure. Dake had been silently and rather humorously regarding his friend's shoulders for a minute or two.

Tom sprang to his feet; he had been sitting by the table absorbed in a book. There could be no question of the pleased surprise in his face, of the heartiness of his welcome. "Old fellow, I am glad to see you."

"It goes without question that I am glad to be here." Dake glanced around the room, and then at his friend, with something in his eyes which would have had a revealing significance to a stranger.

"I must take your word for that then—not your deeds. It is more than three weeks since you last showed your face in this room."

It was a winter evening early in December. The winds had been bickering in the shrubberies outside ever since the sun had gone to its early setting. Inside Tom Draycott's "den," as he called it, the warmth and light were doubly cheerful against the gloom and chill outdoors. A glance or two about the large room would have given you a key to its occupant's character and tastes. The wide, low bookcases enclosed shelves crowded with the classics

and modern literature. The room-corners held weapons, foils, masks — all reminiscent of undergraduate days and sports. There was some handsome china on the mantelpiece. Though the room at once indicated a masculine ownership, there were plenty of feminine touches everywhere, — in blending of colors, and looping of window-draperies, and in all sorts of pretty, useful, or decorative things.

The young men, standing together, threw each other into fine relief. Tom Draycott was some inches the taller, and his blond head, set on his shapely shoulders, showed against Dake's dark coloring and squarer build. The latter's black hair and mustache matched the bright, alert eyes. There was that touch of picturesqueness about the large features and strong-built figure which, long ago, had struck Dorothy Draycott's artistic sense. When it came to a matter of broadcloth, boots, linen, there seemed now hardly a pin's choice between the two. Both wore dark, well-fitting winter suits, but neither had the smallest suggestion of a fop. Of course young Draycott showed in subtle ways of speech and bearing, all which had gone to his inheritance and training. Dake Cramley was of another race and type, but, standing there by the friend whom he loved best on earth, he had no reason to be ashamed that night of all which, in these six years, he had made of himself.

Of course he had not reached this point without a long, dogged struggle of will and purpose. The shy, awkward youth had gained now a certain poise and directness of look and bearing which was the unconscious expression of reserve force. Dake Cramley had made, long before this, a secure berth for himself, in the house of Meredith, Max, and Company; he had risen by slow gradations, always

proving himself equal to one post before he was advanced to another. His intimacy with Tom Draycott had the effect of stimulating all his mental energies. He was still young enough to feel all the fresh delight there is in study, the kindling of intellectual faculties, the hunger for knowledge when once he had fairly entered the new fields. His fine health served him splendidly here; he went to evening schools; he studied far into the night; he joined some private classes; his young mental appetite was constantly whetted by what it fed on. Then his relations with the family at Red Knolls were of infinite value to him. You who know what his past had been can best conceive what a penetrating influence, elevating, restraining, refining, the Draycott atmosphere and example must have been to him at this period.

Dake Cramley was not a genius; he never aspired to one of the professions; his bent was practical, with an aptitude for mathematics and the natural sciences.

The talk this evening continued briskly between the two and in a jesting vein, after they had seated themselves by the table. Dake was almost as familiar with this room as he was with his own by the tiny South End park. On the table stood a large, antique, tureen-shaped dish of Delft porcelain. It was heaped with big russet and red-brown pears. Tom busied himself a few moments in conveying a generous supply to a couple of fruit plates, and disposing the knives on each, saying meanwhile: "We will comfort our souls—or our palates, while we talk—with these pears. They have the finest flavor of anything of their kind I have come across this autumn. Set to work, Dake!" and he pushed a plate toward his friend and drew another to himself.

"Thank you, Draycott. I shall be ready to do justice

to the pears a little later. But I have something to tell you first."

Tom pushed his plate back a little, and gazed at his companion. "Something has been happening to you, Dake!" he said, after a few moments' silence.

"Yes; there has."

"And it's good news?"

"I think you will call it so!" with a little, shrewd smile about the corners of his mouth. Then he sprang up, saluted Tom with an air of profound reverence, and announced that he had just been promoted to a new post in the house of Meredith, Max, and Company — one which included vastly increased responsibilities and a large advance of salary. The man who had occupied this post for years had just vacated it for a still higher one.

It was time now for Tom to get on his feet. "Let us have a grip of fists on that, Dake!" he said. "This is superlatively good news! I congratulate you from my soul."

"I was sure you would like it!" Dake replied in his grave, pleased way, while his eyes spoke where his lips failed. "I had to come over and tell you first of all the world."

"That was, of course, the thing to do. I couldn't be more pleased if some rich old corporation had sent me a retaining fee of — say — five thousand dollars!"

"It was a stunning surprise to me," pursued Dake. "I was just the most pleased fellow in all Boston. But, after all, the first thing I thought of was of you, old fellow, and of how you would take it."

Dake had a little struggle with the words; he did not often speak like this. But to-night the deep headsprings of memory and gratitude had been stirred and they overflowed into his rather slow speech.

"Well, you have scored high this time, Dake! But I always felt it was in you!"

"If you did, you discovered me first. I owe everything to you, Draycott!"

"That is your confounded modesty! You have always overrated tremendously my share in — events."

Dake shook his head; his dark young face showed some very decided lines. When next he spoke, there was a ring of deep feeling in his voice — one which overcame all the usual reluctances of his speech. "It was *I* had to live it! *I* know what it means when a fellow sets about making himself over. Let him who has tried it say whether it is a light matter! It seems at times such hopeless, uphill work — his heart and his will fail him, and the devil is sure to come around with his sneer: 'What a fool you are! The game isn't worth the candle, anyhow. Cut this whole sanctimonious masquerade, and turn in and live out your own life like a man instead of a muff!' And if the struggle was so hard on me, who had sound muscles and healthy blood in my veins to start with, what must it be for the fellows who have demoralized their bodies and souls with all sorts of dissipation! From my soul, I pity them! But when the pinch came, there was always you, Draycott, a great solid fact in my way. Hang it! There was no getting round you! I used to say, 'He's the one fellow in the world who really cares for you, Dake Cramley. He'd be awfully cut up if you should fail. If you don't care a copper what becomes of yourself, show you have manliness enough not to knock under for the sake of your only friend!' So I held to the ship and she brought me into port at last. But it was you, Tom Draycott, who saved me — you and Daisy!"

"Well, I'm ready and proud to share all my honors with her. But I do not budge an inch from my conviction that it was in you, Dake. Understand that, sir! Won't she be mightily pleased when she gets this news, though?"

Dake's laugh relieved the tension of his feelings. "But she will say in her earnest, little woman's way, 'It is no more than I expected, Dake!' She would say that, and mean it too, if I should tell her to-morrow that I had been nominated for next President of the United States."

Tom laughed heartily, and then added: "The people down-stairs will be almost as glad as I am to hear this, Dake. As soon as the company are gone, we will go down and announce it."

Dake's dark cheek flushed. "I would rather leave all that to you, Draycott. It would be rather embarrassing for me."

"There it goes again!" Tom's tone was half-provoked. "It is no use trying to make the slightest lion of you. Why can't you wear your honors a little more openly?"

Despite this rallying, Tom was deeply touched by the share which Dake attributed to him in his present fortunes. It was human that self-love should have some part in this gratification; but words had been spoken that night which thrilled the nobler chords of Tom Draycott's nature, and his strongest feeling was an inexpressible pride and delight in his old protégé's success.

At last they turned to the fruit, and while they were regaling themselves on this, Dake went into the details of his interview with the head of the great paper manufacturing house. It appeared that Meredith, after appointing his new superintendent, had consulted him regarding the proper kind of assistant, and the man had at once suggested Dake Cramley.

"I can't be in two places at once," he averred, "and I want somebody at the mills who will know how to manage the men, and whom I can trust as though I were on hand myself. That young Cramley fills the bill; he is shrewd, steady, and honest to the core. If he is young, he is the man for the post."

"I had been thinking of him myself in that connection," rejoined Richard Meredith, who had grown a little bald and a good deal stouter since his first interview with Dake Cramley in that very office.

He sent for his young employee, and during the next hour the matter was brought to a consummation.

"How will the new position suit you?" interrogated Tom, while the pair of busy fruit-knives were achieving spirals of rind.

"Admirably," Dake rejoined with enthusiasm. "I shall like it infinitely better than a clerk's desk. It will take me up country often to the Branch Road Mills, and I shall have a good deal of outdoor work, which I have always hankered for. When a telegram comes, I must be ready to start off in a moment, and often, no doubt, be gone for days. The only drawback to all this is Daisy. My coming home at night is as sure a thing with her as the sunset."

"When you are away, you must send her out to Red Knolls. If we don't see your faces here, at least once a week, we feel aggrieved. Mrs. Bray's is not your only home."

"You certainly never allow us to suppose that." Then Dake burst into a laugh. "How delighted the good soul will be to hear of my promotion, and how she will be constantly bringing it up when she sits at the head of the table, with her big family!"

Meanwhile Tom Draycott was carefully choosing a half dozen of the finest pears, which he bestowed in a canoe-shaped basket of braided grasses—a pretty, gay-colored thing, which had caught his fancy at an Indian encampment among the mountains. On the mantel was a huge Japan bowl filled with great chrysanthemums in all rich shades of gold, maroon, and crimson. Tom laid a few of the gorgeous blooms among the pears; he enveloped the whole in soft white paper-wrappings. Dake watched the process with pleased, comprehending eyes.

“Give that to Daisy,” said Tom, when he had finished, handing the parcel to Dake. “Tell her there are plenty more awaiting her where these came from.”

The two went out together into the night. Wild-looking clouds, which one might easily fancy vast Titans with gray, streaming beards, were shouldering themselves about the sky. Between them a few stars shone, sweet and shy as faces of stars always shine between hurrying clouds. The pair moved along with big, swinging strides. They were gay as boys to-night. Dake’s good fortune seemed like a part of his own to Tom Draycott. It was much like one of their tramps of six years ago, and which in different ways would leave their marks on two human lives. The young men had not, of course, kept up their walks with their old frequency, but they managed to get off occasionally for a half day’s tramp—miles and miles—among the Boston suburbs.

To-night they walked over to Harvard Square, where Dake boarded an electric; Tom Draycott returned to Red Knolls, whistling old college tunes, and that splendid mastiff Hidalgo—not grown perceptibly older—moved stately by his side.

VIII

HOW ONE FATHER TALKED TO HIS DAUGHTER ABOUT
MARRIAGE

"O PAPA, if people were not so — so disappointing!"

Dorothy Draycott sat alone with her father in the library. Outdoors occasional flurries of snow drove white and ghost-like before the gale. The air was full of wild, storming cries.

There was everything, in wan, starless sky and frost-harried earth, to keep people indoors. The year had reached December at last, and the chill of death was at its heart and it seemed as though no summer could ever be again.

The hearth-fire was awake to-night — the sparks spinning and humming up the wide-mouthed chimney as they had done on that other night when Dorothy Draycott sat in this room and sketched her brother's face, — all the lines slightly exaggerated, — a little mischievous smile lurking about the corners of her mouth.

The library, with its warmth and light, its home-atmosphere, its soft blending and contrasting of color-tones, was a decidedly attractive place against all the December chill and dreariness. Dorothy had been sitting quiet as a mouse, looking at the red, swarming sparks, but hardly seeing them; her hands clasped lightly in her lap; her eyelids drooped; she herself lost for the

last half hour in a reverie which had given a touch of pensiveness to her young face, and which had at last articulated itself in a sudden, explosive fashion and in a half-disgusted, half-resentful tone.

Her father, on the opposite side of the table, had been buried in his letters for the same space of time. The speech or the tone must have struck him, for he threw one of his quiet, penetrating glances at his daughter; then he laid the last of his letters on a little pile which had aggregated at his right, wheeled his arm-chair to the fire and closer to her.

"General remarks of that sort may mean anything or nothing," he said, with the little, dry, humorous note she knew so well. "Won't you please be a little more explicit?"

Dorothy hesitated a moment, putting her palms together reflectively. It was an old habit of her childhood. "I don't believe I have the courage to begin, papa. It will seem so ineffably — silly."

"And in that way cure itself. But this is beating about the bush. Who and what are the people that disappoint you, Dorothy?"

"Sometimes I think it is almost everybody, papa! Now don't lift your eyebrows in that way — please! I do try to see the best side of people — to shut my eyes to the other, but it *will* crop out. It was so different once. I used to believe everybody — almost — was noble, fine, lovely; and now I see all sorts of weaknesses, pettinesses, jealousies, where I could not possibly have believed they existed. They hurt me! But what is one to do? I wish I could go back into the old, all-trusting, all-believing phase. But there is no use; that has gone forever."

"Yes," said her father, with a certain quiet decision in his tones. "You can no more go back to it, my daughter, than you can go back to your dolls and playhouses."

He had, by this time, the key to Dorothy's mood; he knew this was a stage of experience through which her youth must pass,—a stage of deepening insight, perplexity, disillusion, which, to her temperament, would be peculiarly trying.

"But what shall I do, papa?" The tone was half-petulant, half-appealing. "I am so surprised, annoyed, shocked, that I sometimes fear it will all end by my settling down into a hard, cynical old thing."

His eyes twinkled on her with tender amusement. "There is always that danger ahead when one gets to this point. You see how many people do drift into a critical, supercilious, and disgusted habit with their fellows, and what an unfruitful life and what an unhappy character are the logical results; for your experience is a universal one, Dorothy."

"And did you go through with it—you and mamma?" she asked, with a kind of surprised curiosity in her tones, which made him smile at the tall girl sitting opposite him. He noticed that she wore a new dress that night, that it was of a very dark wine-colored tint, the heavy folds clinging close to her young figure. A few deep-gold chrysanthemums glowed against the rich shade of her gown.

Her father laughed. "Then you take it for granted that your mother and I were exceptions to the universal evolutionary processes, do you?"

"Yes, I suppose just that! But I wish you had told me instead of leaving me to find out all this for myself."

"What good would the telling you have done? This

is one of the many experiences which we must live to understand."

"O papa, you are so wise!"

"Do you suppose that I have lived twenty-eight years longer than you and learned nothing?"

"At least you and mamma have come out of your experiences neither hard, critical, nor pessimistic."

"So will you, Dorothy, I confidently believe, and with a faith in human nature and in its possibilities, which nothing can shake. Those whose insight has penetrated deepest, those who have interpreted life most truly,—the world's greatest poets and seers,—have not been the doubters and scoffers. Your young people are, just now, no doubt, very crude, limited creatures; but have patience with them and yourself. Nature does not ripen her harvest in a day, whether the soil she is at work in be brown loam or human souls."

"She will have a long task with some of us," said Dorothy, with a laugh that was partly gay and partly something else. "I suppose we young people are only just out of the chimpanzee stage. That is what the young men seem to me: I mean some of them—not all, of course," correcting herself as she caught the significant uplift of her father's brows. "But a great many of them make such silly jokes and horrid puns, and affect epigrams and superior airs and general disgust with the world. Others are fops or muffs, and conceited—that is no word for it! I could endure all this if it were not for their absurd flatteries and—other nonsense." The last word was a transparent euphemism.

Her father broke into a laugh which had the fresh heartiness of a boy's. "How little the poor fellows suspect they are being slaughtered in this fashion! The

sharp tongues of these smiling young girls when they get started! Don't you suppose your father, my dear, was once just that conceited, rudimentary creature you have been describing?"

Dorothy's sweet mouth could take a very decided line. "Nothing could make me ever believe that, papa!"

"And of course the mothers and sisters regard these sons and brothers in much more flattering lights than you do!"

"It is to be devoutly hoped so! But the sisters — so many of them — disappoint me more than the brothers. They are so vain; so eager to outdo each other; so full of silly prattle and airs and affectations and little jealousies. I wish I did not see these things; I try not to. It seems as though a veil had fallen suddenly from my eyes!" she concluded in a half-plaintive, half-apologetic tone.

"But these chattering, frivolous girls may only need life's experiences to unfold into devoted wives and mothers; these conceited, foppish young fellows may — a couple of decades hence — be doing their part manfully in the world!"

Dorothy did not break the pause that followed; she sat very still, watching the tongues of flame, as they darted in and out, greedily lapping the birch locks.

When her father resumed again, it was in a graver tone. "But nothing can alter this fact that humanity is the finest, noblest, most precious thing in the world! Our relations with men and women of all sorts and conditions are still the supreme thing in our lives. We cannot blink that. We know how people of refined tastes and delicate susceptibilities often shrink from contacts with, and responsibilities to, their fellow-beings. It is a great temptation to shut one's self out from the toiling, toil-

ing, unlovely world, to cultivate one's æsthetic, artistic, literary — what you will — sympathies — live pampered, exclusive, self-indulgent lives. Some people who do this must recur to you, Dorothy. They have developed their tastes at the expense of their hearts."

"Yes; I know," she said softly.

Again there was a pause. The clock ticked louder on the mantel; the sparks hummed joyous in the chimney.

"Sometimes, I think," resumed Donald Draycott, speaking half to himself and leaning his head against the back of his chair, "I have been more or less at fault in the bringing up of my boy and girl. What do they know — at least from experience — of the rough ways of life — of poverty, temptation, trials? Yet it is in these very things that the noblest souls have been tempered. My heart occasionally misgives me lest you and Tom have had too much 'cake and codgering.' But in some shape the great tests must be awaiting you as they wait for all. How are you going to meet them, my daughter, sheltered and guarded as you have been from all the rough ways and the bitter weather? And how was I to send you out in them for a process of toughening?"

"Driving us out as the birds do the young ones from the mother-nest!" said Dorothy, with a swift challenging poise of her head. "You know you never could have done that, papa! However, you will see! Tom and I are not going to discredit your 'cake and codgering!'"

Perhaps it was the tone — full of gay young assertion — rather than the words which her father answered.

"My dear, has it never struck you that things cannot always go on with you as they are going now? We are in a world of change. Events come suddenly sometimes,

and bring new circumstances and relations — especially at your time of life.”

This time Dorothy's face flushed; her head bridled. “Papa, when you talk about circumstances and relations, do you really mean — bring it down to a fine point — getting married?” She accented the last words with infinite disdain.

“Do you wish me to understand that is a foregone impossibility with you?”

“It certainly is something I never reckon with in my future. As for Tom — you know what an insusceptible creature he is! It is surprising, when one thinks what long lovers you and mamma have been, that your children are so devoid of sentiment!”

“Twenty-five and twenty-three!” rejoined Donald Draycott, and he whistled a note or two.

“Well, papa, you may make fun of us; but you will see! We shall remain at Red Knolls all our lives and finally die of old age, I suppose. Getting married, indeed!”

“If your mother had regarded it with the feeling your tone implies, I cannot conceive my life would have been, for more than a quarter of a century, the blessed thing I have found it. But that is not now to the point. You have quite as many admirers as is good for a girl. Hasn't one of them succeeded —”

Dorothy broke in with her prompt, passionate negative. “No, papa, not one! I enjoy gentlemen's society; I like them as friends, companions, guests; I think life would be a horribly dull affair without them. They give it so much interest, sparkle, fun; I like to have sensible talks, too, with some of the best of them, on all sorts of subjects — books, music, pictures, and great events which

are going on in the world. Despite all my strictures, — a girl, you know, must use adjectives, — I have a thorough respect and liking for some of these young fellows. But when it comes to anything more than that — papa, I believe you have spoiled me for other men!”

“And so you tickle me with a compliment, and then coolly throw all further responsibilities on my shoulders! Oh, the depth of young feminine guile!”

“Guile! I never was more sincere in my life! Papa,” with a sudden transition from a gay to a grave tone, “you know all my gentleman friends. They include a pretty wide circle. Who — honor bright — is your favorite among them?”

“Challenged in this peremptory fashion, I am not prepared to say that I have any. Some of these young men have, however, struck me as fine, manly fellows; but I confess I have never hankered for one of the crowd as a son-in-law!”

“There!” The monosyllable was a crescendo of triumph. “I was sure you would feel about them as I do.”

“But *I* am not sure that the feeling, or the want of it, does me any credit — that it has not its root in my selfishness.”

“Papa!”

“Yes; I know precisely what I am saying! The happiness of my child should be my first thought.”

“And that is,” she explained glibly, “by things staying *in statu quo*. No change could be a betterment.”

“There is the rub! Things won’t stay *in statu quo*! Time and inexorable laws are against them. Do you suppose, Dorothy, that Red Knolls can go on forever in the way you have always known it? If that were the

case, I would keep you always as you are, sitting before me to-night. I never want my child to go away from me. If it should come to that, it would cost me a great struggle to give her up to the best man in the world."

"If he were to present himself, I should not want him," with a little repellent gesture. "Why should you talk of giving me up, papa? Do you surmise a possible spinster, and do I seem a doleful spectre in that light?"

Her father laughed at the question, gazing at the blooming creature before him: but in an instant she went on: "Think of mamma's friends! The women among them who are not married are certainly — as a rule — old enough to be."

"Mamma's friends — I mean the unmarried ones — are, some of them, among the sweetest and noblest women I have ever known."

"Well, then?"

"But a man must speak here from his own experience and observation. Despite all the noble men and women who have lived single lives, I believe that for you the highest, deepest blessedness would lie in a true marriage — one where some man would be happier, larger, nobler, because you were his wife — where you too, my child, would be a happier, nobler woman because he was your husband."

Dorothy flushed and laughed a little nervous laugh. Then she said in her spirited, half-defiant way, which was also a very bewitching one: "Well, I am in no haste certainly, to enter on any matrimonial mission, or to be the subject of it. I have one young man on my hands who requires all my endeavors now, as he insists that I do his!"

"Have you ever thought, my dear, that it was within

human possibility that Tom might surprise you some time?"

"By bringing me a sister-in-law!" Dorothy's tone and glance were almost aghast. "O papa, I am not ready for her!"

"He would probably resent as strongly the prospect of a brother-in-law; but neither seems likely, at this juncture, to put the other to such a test. I seem to be harping on the fact that this home-life of ours cannot go on forever. But you yourself will change — more or less; so will Tom. Youth shapes its own future, builds its own fair, impossible world in the realms of its imagination. No human feet have ever mounted the shining terraces which lead to the beautiful air-castles. Yet real life, with all its sober, disenchanting aspects, is something better and nobler than our fairest visions. How old are you, — just, — Dorothy?"

"Twenty-three and a half. It seems only yesterday when that would have struck me as an awful weight of years!"

"And to me it seems, and is, the heyday of youth. But it is also true that you have crossed the line of the first third of your life!"

"What do you mean, papa?"

"Threescore and ten. You know how the psalm goes."

Her eyes flashed intelligent response. "Oh, yes! A third is a large part. You have made me feel very old, papa."

"That was not my intention. You are very young, my dear. All that has gone before has been a getting ready. I hope, should you live to add the other thirds to the first one, you will have ripened into such con-

sciousness of the infinite meanings and glory of life — will have such a heart of youth in you — that you will feel younger than you do now, sitting before me in your fresh girlhood.”

“O papa, what a beautiful wish! I shall carry it with me if I should live to be seventy.” She sprang up, crossed the rug, and kissed him. The two heads — each beautiful in its way — made a fine grouping.

Afterward he held her a few moments sitting on the arm of his chair. “Papa,” she said, very seriously now, “your daughter and mamma’s ought to be something a great deal more and better than she is! I feel that every day; I sometimes envy Tom the look I see in Dake Cramley’s eyes. I wish somebody would look at me in that way! I wonder if anybody in the world is better because I am in it.”

“Tom is a fine, manly fellow!” said his father with a touch of paternal pride. “One has not solved all the problems at twenty-five. But I think he is not going to disappoint me. As for Dake Cramley, I shall be grateful to the boy always for what he has done for your brother.”

“Dake, of course, will never regard it in that light. But — yes —” said Dorothy reflectively, if a little disconnectedly, “I see you are right, papa.”

“Take the lesson to heart, then, little girl! Our unconscious influence may radiate far — may reach human souls in ways we little suspect. We never know where — how — we may be touching others. Somebody in this world — man or woman — may, this very hour, be living a better, braver life — one touched to finer issues — because, all unconsciously, you have reached and influenced it.”

Dorothy’s eyes shone radiant through their tears. “O papa, I should be the most blessed of mortals if I

could know that! I would go all over the world to find such a man or woman!"

"And the secret of your power may, after all, lie in the fact that you do not know — that you cannot find."

A little later, when she had returned to her chair, and he had laid some fresh wood on the andirons, she broke out with a lighter tone: "We have had such a long, serious talk to-night!"

"I think myself it is time for a lighter key."

"Then, papa, suppose I should astonish you one of these days with a grand, ambitious marriage?"

"What do you call, then, a grand, ambitious marriage?"

"Well, for instance, one with a foreign gentleman, high descent, ancient title, and all that!"

"You — Dorothy Draycott — with your seven generations of American ancestors!" answered her father in a tone which matched her own. But that changed, in a moment, to one of great earnestness. "Heaven forbid that you should deny your birthright in that fashion! All that you are now, all that you may ever become — any graces of womanhood, any good fortunes which may have fallen to your share, my daughter, you owe to the country which has bestowed upon you such immeasurable blessings. Ancient titles, indeed!" he continued, in a half-ironical, half-indignant tone. "What an absurdity it seems — if it were not something worse — to lavish the wealth one's own country, in all her fostering ways and by all her larger freedom, has afforded one the means of acquiring in buying back the 'mediæval bawble' our forefathers had the good sense to abolish almost as soon as their feet touched these shores! But my daughter will not be troubled. She has not one of the grand fortunes which prove so alluring to these titled foreigners."

"But, papa, surely there must be good men, noble men, who marry my countrywomen for themselves — not for their fortunes."

"Undoubtedly. But I was speaking of the men who do. True and noble manhood is not, of course, limited to any nation, as some of us are, perhaps, inclined to imply when we lose our heads a little on stump and platform. All I desire is, that my daughter shall carry her untitled head with more pride than if it wore a coronet to her grave!"

"Well, she will! I pledge you my word there. I am a loyal American to the marrow, and have no more hankering for a title than you have for a son-in-law."

"When he comes, then, — 'lang and late be the day, my leddy,' — I shall, to that extent, be ready to welcome him!"

The door opened suddenly, and Tom Draycott ushered his mother and Mrs. Dayles into the library.

"You look as though you two had had an enormously good time!" exclaimed Tom, glancing from his sister to his father.

"We have," she answered, springing up and confronting him with eyes which accented her words. "The most delightful two hours in the world!"

"And you, Grace," asked Donald Draycott, "what sort of an evening have you had in the drawing-room? I was relieved to have Tom slip gracefully into my shoes and play the host's part."

"He did himself credit to-night, and managed it very adroitly, so that you and Dorothy should not be interrupted. Our little company were in high spirits. They made me laugh with their clever talk and gay repartee. How bright the fire is! How cosey and happy you look in here to-night!"

Donald Draycott knew his wife. She was not the kind of woman who criticises or disparages her guests the moment they have left her threshold.

"We will have a change of programme. Shall it be a game of whist, Grace?"

"Not whist to-night, dear. We will have some poems instead."

"Poor Grace! She has been horribly bored, I see," mentally commented Donald Draycott.

He took up Browning's "Men and Women" and read several of his own favorite poems in a voice which interpreted their deeper meanings. Tom followed, with the rich, flute-like music of some of Tennyson's brief songs, and Dorothy recited in her clear contralto a couple of Whittier's ballads, and to those who listened on that wild winter night they were like a breath from the heart of summer.

Then they sat, a little silent group, around the fire, while red flames swept over the logs and roared up the wide-throated chimney. Donald Draycott watched the sweet face opposite him, its gaze on the flames, and silently thanked God that the woman sitting there was his wife. At last, when she lifted her eyes with a great shining in their depths, he said to her, "Well, Grace, what are you thinking about the fire?"

She smiled. "A good many things."

"Yes, I saw that. We don't want to lose one."

"I was trying to make out what the fire was saying, and then it came to me all of a sudden — like a flash — that I was listening to the Hearth Song — the oldest song in the world. It is as ancient as the human race; it has come down to us from the world's morning, from the primeval forests, from the earliest homes! Think

what tender and hallowed associations cluster around it! It is the one song which has gone all about the earth, and with it have gone sparkle and light and warmth and cheer. It is the same in all tongues — under all skies. We hear at our hearthstone to-night the joyful, soft-humming thing to which the earliest mothers listened when the eyes of their babies were caught and dazzled by the beautiful, flashing, mounting flames. The hearth-fire and its song are the symbol and interpreter of the home — of all the sweetest, most sacred things in human lives.”

In the pause which followed Tom spoke first. “If we sit here all night, we shall not say anything so good as that. I move we adjourn at once. Whew!” as the winds roared at the windows. “Old Boreas is out on wild rampage! We shall go to sleep to his trumpeting.”

IX

THE GATHERING OF THE WINDS ; THE BREAKING OF THE
STORM

THE young man straightened himself as one does under a sudden blow. There was a dazed look in his eyes. An almost deadly pallor supplanted his healthy brown color.

His friend, an elderly man, with a slim, wiry figure, a smooth-shaven, intelligent face, and a resolute mouth, watched him with shrewd, sympathetic eyes. He knew the younger had had a blow — knew that the way in which he received it would be a test of character and manliness.

Lawyer John Stacey had been haunted, more or less, for days by the spectre of this moment; yet now that it had come, he was inwardly cursing himself for being too precipitate. "He should have known better — used a little circumlocution. It was horribly rough on Philip, anyhow."

Yet the man who admonished himself in this wise knew it was better that the fated words should be spoken by his lips than another's. Indeed, he had several times made an attempt to approach the subject, but Philip's absolute unconsciousness had baffled him. It was a natural sequence that the truth, when it came at last, should take the form of blunt, laconic expression and be followed by swift remorse.

Dramatic as the moment was, — one destined to effect an absolute change in all the habits and circumstances of the younger's life, — there was nothing in the scene and surroundings to suggest any unusual event.

Two men, with at least thirty years' difference in their ages, were sitting that September morning in one of the pleasantest of the many pleasant houses at Colorado Springs. Interior and exterior were alike suggestive of an English country house. The simple, tasteful furnishings seemed to have attained the ideal of refined comfort. On the broad green lawn in front, the masses of beautiful flowering were relieved by the dark shrubbery.

Outside, the day was one of Colorado's perfect days. Life seemed to throb with quickened pulse and deepened volume in this sparkling, joyous, sun-saturated air. The sky was one dazzling brilliance of azure. Over all, Pike's Peak looked down in solemn, majestic repose on the little town stretched picturesquely at its feet.

There was a silence of two or three minutes between the pair who sat in the long drawing-room which, despite various modern appointments, suggested another climate and habits. The clock in the hall ticked loud and imperative in the stillness. At last, with an evident effort at self-control, the young man spoke.

"Did I understand you to say that the whole fortune had gone to wreck?"

"If I had said less, Philip, it would have been because I sought to spare you. Perhaps somebody else should have told you; somebody who would have done it less bluntly — have softened the facts, somehow!"

"But all that would not have affected — facts?"

Philip read the answer in the other's face.

At the Denver bar John Stacey had the reputation of

being a shrewd, hard-headed lawyer; but at this moment the man could not trust himself to utter a word.

Philip Fallowes — it was less than a month since he had parted with Tom Draycott, a little after Class Day, when the telegram with tidings of his uncle's sudden illness broke up all the young men's plans for a fortnight's roughing among the Maine streams and woods — rose now with a deep, struggling breath; he straightened himself and paced the long room several times. The elder man watched him in remorseful silence; he knew that he was trying to gain time for thought and speech.

At last Fallowes faced about and returned to his friend. "This has all come on me so suddenly!" he said in a tolerably steady voice, but one tense with repressed feeling. "I don't seem able to compass the thing in a moment."

"I know, Philip; but you are not going to let this thunderbolt crush you." The tone made the words an appeal.

"The wreck of the whole fortune? I hope not. It takes a fellow awhile to adjust himself to such a vast change — to find out precisely what it means to him."

"Of course — of course. All that cannot be done in an hour. But it may not, after all, prove so huge a cataclysm as it appears! Time, events, will certainly befriend you."

Philip did not reply. The two sat down again. In a moment the question came which the lawyer had been forecasting all this time.

"Mr. Stacey, who is responsible for this thing? How much did my uncle Radleigh know of it?"

"Your uncle Radleigh was my old friend." The law-

yer's lips quivered. "That was why I wished some other man might tell his nephew."

Philip gazed out of the window. The gay sunshine, the glad summer-world outside, gave him a sickening sensation. He turned away sharply. "There must be some infernal scoundrelism at the bottom of this business," he broke out fiercely. "Do you dare to insinuate to me that uncle Rad ever — ever did me any wrong?"

The last tones rang with mounting passion.

John Stacey was a man of hot temper, but he felt at that moment that if Philip Fallowes had knocked him down he could easily have forgiven him.

"Be just to me—to yourself, Philip." The tones were almost those of a man who sues for mercy. There was a little pause and the voice took a decided note. "But you are wholly in the right with regard to your uncle. It is my unalterable conviction that Radleigh Fallowes never did you an intentional wrong in his life."

Philip's lip shook for a moment under its young brown mustache. When he spoke again, it was in a softened key, his gaze riveted to the other's face.

"Mr. Stacey, you are the man of all others—my uncle's old friend and lawyer—to tell me the truth. I want to know the worst now—to have this matter sifted to the bottom."

The talk which followed lasted for several hours. The elder man had by far the larger share in it. The younger interposed often with eager, passionate questions of a kind that would leave no stone unturned—no fact veiled or softened.

Of course this talk presupposed some knowledge of antecedents with which the reader cannot be acquainted.

These, as well as the main points in the long, memorable interview, must be briefly outlined at this time.

Philip Fallowes had lost both parents before he reached his tenth birthday; he was the sole inheritor of their fortunes. His only uncle, a bachelor brother of his father, was, with an intimate friend, appointed guardian of the boy and trustee of his large inheritance. The co-trustee died just after Philip reached his fifteenth birthday. From that time the sole responsibility was transferred to the uncle. One of the most genial and kindly of men, always ready to do a favor, his good nature was often imposed upon; he was a most intelligent and delightful companion, a lover of books, with fine tastes in music and art. No father could have lavished more pride and affection on an only son than Radleigh Fallowes did on his orphan nephew. Philip, for his part, adored his uncle. Of New England parentage, the boy had been born and spent his earliest years on the Pacific slope; but soon after the death of the joint-trustee he had accompanied his relative to Denver, where the latter, having rather optimistic views of finance, became a good deal infected with the contagion of Western speculation; he invested largely, and, conservative capitalists thought, rashly, in all sorts of Colorado property,—railroads, cattle-ranches, real estate, and mines whose assays promised early and enormous dividends. In these ventures, when he risked his own interests with unquestioning confidence, he would be likely to take the same course with Philip's inheritance, now under his absolute control.

The nephew, with perfect reliance on his uncle's judgment, never asked a question. Money was the last thing about which he concerned himself; he had always had all and more than he wanted, and this happy state of

affairs seemed as natural to the fortunate youth as the sunrise or the procession of the seasons.

When it came to Philip's entering Harvard, the separation was a severe strain on both; but the uncle had set his heart on his nephew's graduating at his own Alma Mater. One of Philip's vacations had been spent abroad, and a long continental trip had been planned to succeed his graduation.

"I am getting tired of this perpetual rush and roar of Western life," exclaimed his uncle, as Philip was on the point of leaving for Harvard the last time. "I want to pull out of it for a while, and give heart and brain a long rest in the quiet of some of those old, dreamy continental cities. We will turn our backs, one of these days, on the whole fool's chase, Philip!"

Something in the tone made Philip turn and gaze at his uncle. It was not like him, with his optimistic temper and abundant vitality, to talk in this strain. It struck him for the first time that the face had a worn, anxious look.

"Uncle Rad," he exclaimed, "you are wearing yourself to a shadow over your varied business affairs. Why don't you let the whole thing slide? Certainly you and I have all the money we can ever possibly want."

Radleigh Fallowes looked at his nephew — the splendid, lithe, straight-shouldered fellow — with some expression which rather startled Philip, because it puzzled him.

"As for the mammon, people are not apt to find they have too huge a pile of it in the long run, my boy, Philip."

The last words were very tender. Those which went before might have struck a fine ear as meant for a jest, with some underlying thought struggling with itself.

"Well," returned Philip with a careless, characteristic shrug of his shoulders, "let the rest of mankind go dig and grind as they will! I, at least, am amply content with my share of this world's pelf. I've lived long enough, uncle Rad, to bless my stars that I am out of this infernal race for riches."

Was that a suppressed groan he heard? On the instant there was a loud tap at the door. Uncle Rad wrung his nephew's hand. The carriage was waiting below, and there was only time for Philip to catch the eastern-bound train. This was the last talk he ever had in his uncle's rooms at the Denver hotel.

When they met next, it was at Colorado Springs. Philip had hurried off in hot haste on receiving his telegram. Some friends of his uncle, — English people, — to whom, on their first coming to America, he had been able to render various services, had, on returning to England for the summer, placed their house at his disposal and fairly forced the acceptance upon him.

When he came to them for a farewell visit, he looked troubled and had grown older; he regretted that business engagements must prevent his joining Philip on Class Day; he often recurred to the matter as something on which he had set his heart.

Young Fallowes had reached his uncle less than two days before his death. He had lain for the most part in a comatose condition, rousing at times, however, sufficiently to recognize his nephew. Once he had gazed at him silently for a long time, with some inexplicable tenderness and pity in his eyes. Then he spoke with slow, difficult utterance. "There are many things I would like to explain, Phil; but you will learn them soon enough. When you do, remember always that, whatever

mistakes I made, however recklessly I acted sometimes, I meant everything for your good — remember those as my last words ! ”

Philip leaned over his uncle, swallowing the dry sob in his throat. “ I shall remember you have been always, uncle Rad, what only the best, tenderest father in the world could be to his son. ”

The loss of his uncle was the first real grief of young Fallowes's life. Without him it seemed the world must go to pieces.

In that morning talk with the lawyer, Philip was learning what the dying speech meant — learning that his fortune had been swallowed up in speculations and enterprises which seemed to have a solid basis at the beginning, but had collapsed with time and the pressure of financial crises. It is the old story which always appears so novel, so unparalleled, to its victim. Radleigh Fallowes had been the dupe, partly of unscrupulous men, partly of his own extravagant dreams and fatuous credulity. It was, in many cases, the lawyer averred, impossible to ferret out the facts, discover how the elder man's fortune, and the much larger one with which he had been entrusted, had disappeared. Mining stocks, which paid, or had promised to, large dividends and then went up, like soap-bubbles, had absorbed a considerable portion of the estate. There had been other speculations, followed by shrinkages and failures which the shrewdest business instinct might not have foreseen. Philip's uncle had tried to redeem his first mistakes by plunging deeper into speculation ; he had, for instance, gone very heavily into Atchison and Topeka. Some of these ventures might, with time and patience, have proved productive ; but Radleigh Fallowes had grown desperate with

heavy losses, and in his need of immediate funds had parted with bonds and stocks at a time when their market values had reached the nadir. At last he could no longer hide the truth from himself. Not only his own fortune was gone; he had wrecked Philip's! The consciousness, no doubt, had shortened his life.

All this, with much detail, Philip learned that summer morning which was to form the great turning-point in his life, his young face growing whiter as he listened, his gaze riveted on the lawyer.

There was a long pause at last. It was the younger man who broke it.

"But uncle Rad — it was all right, of course — he only used the money according to his best knowledge —" the words died in his throat.

The lawyer understood; he knew that the question which Philip failed to articulate through all these hesitations and incoherences was one which concerned his uncle's character. That was supreme with him at the moment when he learned he was beggared.

The elder man moved nervously. Then he straightened himself and the two gazed a few moments silently in each other's eyes.

"I think you would rather have me make a clean breast at once?"

Stacey spoke in the doubtful tone of one who seeks rather than gives advice.

Philip made an assenting gesture; his face was ashen pale.

"Your uncle got into tight places with both your investments and his own, and in order to save them, pledged securities which did not belong to him; in short, he went beyond his legal rights in the way he handled

and risked your properties. The law has a hard name for things of this sort. No doubt he brought himself to believe he was serving you in these transactions, and that the end would justify the means. Then I think he must have grown a little wild at last—seeing how things were going; he could not otherwise have kept on as he did—making havoc with your estate. But what is the use of torturing you with details? Had your uncle lived, you would not have brought any action —”

“Never!” Philip’s voice thundered out its negative; “I would have died first!”

Stacey bowed. “I have not a doubt there. In justice to myself I must add I had not an idea how things were going to the dogs. Your uncle did not confide these transactions to me, or I might have saved him some huge mistakes. Philip,” with a sharp change from the professional tone and manner to one of anxious sympathy, “you will stand up like a brave man under this avalanche?”

The look in the dark young eyes hurt the elder man. After a little pause the answer came. “This blow, you must see, is worse than the other. Uncle Rad was all I had and —” he stopped there.

Lawyer Stacey — it is only just to say — did his utmost at this time to strengthen and hearten his young friend: he volunteered a good deal of wise counsel, as a man could with his varied experience in human life; he was profuse, too, in suggestions for the future and pledges of personal interest and assistance. Philip, however, had reached the limit of his endurance. Stacey began to doubt whether he heard what he was saying to him.

The servant came to announce lunch. The lawyer glanced at his watch; he had rushed off from Denver, leaving an important case, for this interview.

Hurrying along the avenue in order to board the next train for Denver, Stacey communed with himself. "Poor boy! He is awfully cut up. No wonder! Brought up as he has been too! Idol of his uncle! Curled darling of fortune! How is he going to breast this hurricane? It seemed heartless to go off and leave him with that stunned look, but the case has reached a critical point and I must be on hand. Then I saw the greatest favor I could do Philip was to leave him alone."

X

CHALLENGING HIS FATE

THE three or four days which followed will always be a kind of nightmare when Philip Fallowes looks back on them. They hold moments, however, which stand out with agonizing distinctness in his memory.

When he looked off to his future, it seemed an utter impossibility to adjust his ideas and plans to the new life that was awaiting him, — a life all whose material props had fallen. To have no money — that, in the fewest words, was what it meant to him! He tried to represent it to himself in all its bareness; but it seemed a good deal like a creature entering a new planet, or learning to breathe in a new element. The first problem of human existence — roof to shelter and food to nourish — was facing him now in all its remorseless hardness. How was he — Philip Fallowes — to solve it?

At any moment of his prosperous life he would have resented the idea of being a mammon worshipper. All his instincts and tastes, inborn and trained, would have recoiled from the hard, arrogant, purse-proud type of man. He knew, of course, that poverty existed in the world; that it was, perhaps, the immediate occasion of its widest and deepest misery; that, in all ages, some of the wisest and noblest souls had had to wrestle with it, and sometimes, in the unequal struggle, be defeated.

But knowing all this was such a different thing from feeling that henceforth he would have to earn his own dinner before he could eat it!

Then the great loss and grief which underlay all the rest would leap into such vivid consciousness that it swallowed up every other feeling. Uncle Rad was gone! He would never see the dear, handsome face — never hear the kind, familiar tones again! All the other loss seemed as nothing compared with this one. Philip never blamed his uncle for his own wrecked inheritance.

“Uncle Rad had made awful mistakes, of course, and been driven to desperate measures to retrieve them and save Philip and himself from ruin. He was not a business man — he, with his scholarly tastes and generous beliefs in men! They had taken advantage of all this; they had deceived, plundered, ruined him!”

So Philip reasoned, his heart torn with tenderness and grief, but with never one disloyal throb to his uncle's memory.

Sometimes, pacing the long rooms of the silent house, where two or three servants had been left in charge, his thoughts would go back to the past,—he would be at Harvard once more, amid all the stirring scenes and interests of his undergraduate life; now he would be deep in his study, full of the joyous sense of ample horizons and kindling ideas which the acquisition of fresh knowledge brings to youth; now in the thick of athletic games and rivalries; now pacing the campus with Tom Draycott or having one of their long, earnest talks together in his own room.

Then over all this vivid scene, a consciousness of the present would rush back in one overwhelming wave.

He was unutterably glad to be alone at this crisis of

his fate; he recoiled at the thought of going back to Denver and facing his uncle's old friends. Their curious glances, their condolences, even their generous sympathy, would hurt his proud, tortured spirit. "He would not be an object for their pity!" lifting his head with sudden haughtiness. "People, no doubt, would have their say that Radleigh Fallowes had betrayed his trust and beggared his nephew. But the man was in his grave, and those who had hounded him to it would probably be silent now, and, as Philip would make no sign, the nine days' wonder would soon be over and the great gossiping world go hunting other quarry than Radleigh Fallowes!"

So Philip reasoned. He was aware that he had friends — his own and his uncle's — who would not be wanting to him at this time; he probably had only to ask, and some standing-place in the world, some sort of occupation, would be secured for him. He had the splendid equipment of youth and health, of brains and education. But he had no training for any special line of work. In his easy-going, pampered life, aptitudes which might be available for earning his livelihood had thus far not declared themselves.

He knew that his uncle had designed him for the bar, and he himself expected, after their year or two's travel in Europe, to return home and "buckle down" to legal study.

"I have set my heart on your choice of a profession," uncle Rad had said more than once, even before Philip entered Harvard. "You will have a big fortune to look after, one of these days, my boy," glancing fondly at the youth, "and your legal knowledge won't come amiss in the thousand and one practical questions sure to turn up. The want of just that sort of knowledge has handicapped me all my life."

Philip, wounded and stunned, felt now all the fiery impatience of youth to cut away from his past, to plunge into a world of strangers and make his first trial of his own energies, amid entirely new scenes and associations. All his pride was up in arms at this time. He shrank from the idea of being even transiently beholden to men who might have felt it a pleasure to serve the nephew for his uncle's sake.

"It would reflect on *him*," he said, bringing down his clenched hand on a small card-table with a force which threatened to overturn the fragile thing. "I will seek no man's help; I will shift for myself!"

During these days he paced the solitary rooms for hours, or set out on long walks, avoiding the few people whom he knew at Colorado Springs. Sometimes he would find himself in the wide stillness and amid all the solemn, impressive forms of the Garden of the Gods; sometimes he would wander off into Cheyenne Cañon, among its seas of wild-flowering loveliness, and listen to the happy choring of its flashing creeks and the slow, tidal-like rise and fall of winds among its towering pines; he never returned from these long, solitary walks without feeling — perhaps unconsciously — somewhat calmed, somehow comforted.

His west windows commanded a splendid view of the mountains. He could not keep away from them. The huge bulk, the majestic grandeur, of Pike's Peak, the beautiful lines of Cheyenne Mountain, exercised a fascinating spell upon him during these lonely days. They stood, mighty symbols of strength, repose, unchangeableness, in a world that for him had suddenly gone to pieces.

Their very silences grew filled with mystic voices for

him. "Come to us!" they seemed to say. "Leave the great world, with all its voices and strifes, behind you — at least for a while. You shall find the strength and healing we hold for you in our eternal calms, in our mighty solitudes!"

Philip had not spent so much of his life in Colorado without learning much about mining life,—its hardships, its excitements, and the sudden fortunes of some lucky moment, that seemed as exciting as the old Arabian fictions. Stories of this sort could not fail to dazzle the imagination of an eager, listening boy. They recurred vividly now, with a special relation to himself.

"Was not this," he reflected, "the opening he wanted? Could he not gather himself together, seek some out-of-the-way place in the great Range, and try his first struggle with fate? There would, of course, be hardships of all kinds, and a rough apprenticeship to serve; but"—a little quiver crossed his under lip—"what did all that matter now?"

Young Fallows could never be sure of the precise moment when he made up his mind to go off into the mining-camps; but one morning, gazing from his west window on Pike's Peak, when its vast shoulders were shawled in gray mists, he knew that his decision was made.

It was like his present mood to be all eagerness for change and action. In this crisis of his destiny he consulted no soul; he carried out his plans with all the rash absoluteness of youth and inexperience.

A conversation which he had overheard on his return trip from the East recurred to him. Under other circumstances he might never have thought of it again. A couple of miners occupied seats in the car in close

proximity to his own. They were conspicuous for fine broadcloth and flamboyant neckties. They were loud and voluble, if not grammatical, over mining experiences and recent lucky "finds." Philip, in his anxieties over the uncle to whom he was hastening, listened idly to the talk. Much of it was concerned with a new mining region in the northwestern part of the Rocky Mountain Range, where rich pockets and promising leads had been discovered among the foot-hills. A new settlement in a rough district, fifty miles from the nearest station of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, was struggling into life. Close at hand, on a broad, wilderness-plateau of the lower foot-hills, the early stages of mining work — sinking of shafts, boring of tunnels, and aggregation of engines and varied machinery — were being rapidly pushed. The name of the settlement was Miner's Rest. Philip had wondered whether it had anything to do with that grim Western humor so largely responsible for the nomenclature of the mining districts.

Philip Fallowes made up his mind to challenge his fate and start at once for this unknown corner of the world. Time and a less desperate mood might have modified this rash resolve. As it was, he acted on the spur of the moment; he purchased a miner's outfit, wrote to Stacey, making known his decision, and asking him to dispose of his uncle's personal effects to defray all outstanding debts. In less than a week after their momentous interview, he set out for Miner's Rest.

XI

THE CRISIS

PHILIP FALLOWS had been at Miner's Rest more than a month. It seemed to him longer than all the rest of his life. It had been one ceaseless battle with deadly homesickness and inarticulate misery. The wonder with him was that life could be so intolerable and yet a fellow manage to drag himself through it. His present was as totally dissociated from his past as though a trackless abyss separated them. He had plunged, totally unprepared, and in a crisis of young desperation, into the sternest and roughest conditions of mining life, in a remote northwestern region of the Rocky Mountain Range. The daily hardships, the numberless privations, were such as to tax the nerve and endurance of men long seasoned in mountain camps. What must these have been to the delicately trained youth, whose fastidious tastes and habits had become a second nature! He had borne it all silently, withdrawing into himself, seeking no companionship, no sympathy, and finding in the hard, rough mining community, with its coarse talk, its vulgar jests, its endless profanity, his deepest repugnance and disgust.

But this rude community was not long in perceiving the unflattering estimate which the handsome young stranger who had appeared in its midst had formed of

it. It had swift resentful instincts. It let him alone for a while; but when the time came, and the feeling had intensified, it would be likely to take the summary methods of mountain camps in expressing its indignation.

Philip had been too much absorbed in his own misery to give a thought to the opinions others might be entertaining of him. In some moods he cursed himself for rushing off into this savage mountain wilderness. He had many minds to leave it, but the inexorable questions always came up: "Where was he to go?" "What was he to do?"

His funds were rapidly dwindling. Living, even in a wretched cabin and on miner's fare, was incredibly expensive in such altitudes and with such imperfect methods of transportation. If he presented himself at Denver, he had no means to pay his bills for a week at the hotel where he had shared his uncle's apartments. There was the pinch, too! It would be certain to call down reproaches on the uncle, if his nephew showed himself penniless in his old home. Poor uncle Rad! The old grief tore at his heart again.

Philip, during this nightmare of misery, gave himself no rest. Some fierce impulse goaded him to incessant activity. This, perhaps, kept him from utter despair. Dressed in the universal blue-flannel shirt, his corduroy trousers tucked into his high boots, getting a fresh layer of tan every day, he went off by himself into deep, dreary, boulder-littered gulches, where he staked his claims, or climbed the bare, desolate ledges with panting breath, and toiled with his pick until he was ready to sink with fatigue.

Miner's Rest — the name was a misnomer now, but no

doubt expressed as truthfully as poetically the feeling of the pioneers who first penetrated through the upper country of peaks and ragged ravines and boulder-cluttered ledges to its seclusion — was originally one of the loveliest spots on earth. It was a long, cradle-shaped cañon, which had snuggled itself down in the heart of the foot-hills. A brown creek went singing, flashing, and tumbling down the long, irregular line of terraces at the head of the valley. Wide expanses of meadow, stretches of noble woods, and all the radiant loveliness of masses of Colorado wild flowers must have made the place a Paradise before man had invaded it. His occupation had converted it from beauty to ugliness. A long street, bare and unsightly, sprawled for more than a mile along what had lately been gay, flower-littered meadows. There were two or three gambling-saloons, clusters of rude, flat-roofed log-cabins, box-like houses, built of unseasoned pine, with a sprinkling of canvas tents. Everything was as grim, unkempt, and unsightly as a mining town could possibly be in the first stages of exploitation and in a back mountain wilderness.

Yet painful as was the sight of this despoiled loveliness, the true altruist would have found consolation in reflecting that the place represented immeasurably higher values from the hour when man had penetrated and ravished its virgin solitudes.

Over all these the Mountains, silent, steadfast, implacable, looked down from their far heights on the marred loveliness, as they had looked down on the hidden cañon which for ages had smiled and dimpled and burst into seas of wild blossoming at their feet.

One night Philip Fallows, in an access of disgust with the vile tobacco smoke and the viler jokes of several

miners and muleteers with whom he had shared a cabin, rose abruptly and, without word or sign to his companions, started out on a solitary tramp. He struck off into a narrow trail which, just outside the settlement, twisted itself around a jagged, boulder-strewn slope, until it reached a plateau of close pine woods. He plunged into these and threw himself down on the thick mat of pine needles; he wondered — this tall, strong youth of twenty-three — whether there was in the whole world a being so hopelessly wretched as himself! A cold despair settled upon his soul. There was a gray sky overhead. The wind moaned desolately among the pines. Occasionally a star would peer out from a broken cloud, as a sweet face glances from a lattice and is gone. He was glad to get away from all the hateful sights and sounds of Miner's Rest.

Philip Fallowes had, under his healthy brown hue, been losing flesh rapidly during these weeks. No one had observed this, and Philip, if he had known, would not have cared. It was the culminating moment of his misery. He longed for death, as he sat motionless at the foot of the towering pine.

In crises like this, men usually think of suicide. The idea more than once flashed across Philip's brain. He fingered the revolver at his belt. Life, with all its young powers and strengths, was throbbing high in his pulses; he drew his hand away with a shudder.

He found himself hungering suddenly for some human companionship. For the first time it struck him that he had been holding himself rigorously aloof from the human life about him. He reflected that if he were found dead under the pines next morning, not a soul would spare him one regretful thought. The kindest

comment would be: "Poor fellow! An unlucky dog, anyhow! Not one of your hail-fellow-well-met sort! Run his head into the wrong hole when he showed himself in the roughest kind of a backwoods, devil-may-care, Rocky minin' camp!"

Young Fallowes winced a little at thought of these speeches. The reaction from the long tension of days of solitary misery was setting in. "Down below, less than a mile away," he reflected, "the saloons were open, the lights were flaring, the glasses clinking about the bar." He heard the loud voices, the vulgar jests, the hoarse guffaws, that greeted some sally of native wit. These men were drinking, carousing, gambling, after the day's hard labor at pounding the rocks or washing the grains of gold from pay gravel.

A great wave of temptation swept over soul and flesh of the young man. The swiftness and fierceness of the revulsion was largely due to the novel conditions and experiences which had surrounded him for weeks. A passionate longing for human fellowship assailed him.

"What was the use," he asked himself, "of being fastidious about the quality? He must take what was at hand. Fate, or his own folly, had brought him among these people. He might as well swallow his scruples, accept the situation, and plunge into the current."

Philip had the inexperience of youth. Could he have penetrated to the sources of his mood, he might have obtained some mastery over it. As it was, he yielded to the social impulses and half-animal instincts astir within him. The thought of the warmth and light, the crowds and tawdry decorations of the saloons allured his imagination. "Why should he not go down and try *their*

way?" he asked himself, striking the heel of his boot sharply into the soft rug of pine needles. "Why could he not be sharing in the fun and trying the novel experiment of drowning his misery in one good solid drunk! If he was in for it, too, he might try his luck at the gambling-table. Possibly he might win, and a little addition to his funds just now would not come amiss. But, of course," — his outraged conscience interposing at this point, — "he could take care of himself; he would not go near certain kinds of mire in which some of the others were wallowing!"

Philip Fallowes sprang to his feet; his resolution was taken; he had reached the darkest, the most perilous, moment of his life. Perhaps some instinct made him half conscious of this; for, as he drew up his tall figure and stretched his arms, he broke out, angry and defiant, as though in answer to some rebuking inner voice: "I cannot bear this any longer! I tell you, I will not. It will simply drive me mad to stay here in this darkness and solitude. Warmth and light and some kind of human companionship are waiting for me down there. I swear I am going to them if I am going to the devil!"

A moment later he came rapidly out of the deep shadow of the pines and started by the narrow, writhing trail for the settlement.

A gleam slanted suddenly across a big, gray boulder in his path. He glanced up at the sky; he saw the moon had just crept over a sharp peak on his right. The gray clouds had broken and lay in tangled streamers around the oval of deep azure against which shone the serene loveliness of her face.

Fallowes stood still. The sight had recalled another scene. It was a midsummer evening, and he was walk-

ing on the piazza at Amoury Roost, and all Red Berry Roads, flooded with moonshine, lay around him, and a young girl in the charm and freshness of dawning womanhood was walking by his side. That was the happiest hour, the dearest memory, of all his past!

He heard the soft-cadenced, girlish voice again, the catches of breath, the breaks of laughter, and saw the wonderful brown eyes glancing away from him to the moon,—the same moon shining up there now on the crest of the mountain.

That girl was in the world to-night. All that purity and beauty of soul and of flesh which had drawn him so subtly and powerfully swept back again, and possessed heart and thought and memory; he stood still on a little shelf of rock over which the trail passed, and he gazed at the fleecy clouds and the stars flocking between them; but when he looked at the moon, he shuddered and involuntarily put his hand before his eyes. It was not the calm gaze of the moon which had sent that sickening thrill through him; it was the thought of Dorothy Draycott's eyes looking into his soul!

For he had remembered where he was going!

Philip retraced his way to the pines with a blind instinct to get as far as possible from the place for which he had started with such fierce eagerness.

The clouds were rapidly vanishing by this time, and the moon in mid-sky had now the right of way. She rode over the treetops and filled the woods with a weird, tender, mystic light. Philip trod to and fro among the boles in the still shadows and the silver gleams. All his soul—its nobler faculties, its finer impulses—was kindled within him. The deadly paralysis and despair had passed forever. Now that he had come to himself,

he could only recall with loathing the thoughts and resolves of an hour before.

Far away as Dorothy Draycott had been that night, it was not so far that she could not come back and call him from madness and despair to life and hope and courage. He realized fully what she had been — what she had done for him. That young romance of which he had never breathed a syllable to human ears, must always now have a sacred association with this night in his memory. Had she not dawned upon his life, from the first, something better and finer than all his dreams of girlhood! He had always been conscious that her presence, her ingenuous, bewitching talk, playful as childhood one moment and earnest with dawning womanhood the next, had kindled the noblest desires, the highest aspirations, his careless, happy youth had known. In his boundless gratitude, he covenanted with himself now never to shame that hour, that scene, that memory of her. Here would be something worth living for! He grasped at the idea with the eagerness of young imagination and passionate feeling.

In the revulsion of his mood, the expansion of his mental horizon, the inflooding of new thoughts and emotions, he paced for hours the dim wood-aisles. Fresh plans and purposes stirred within him. He would no longer live silent and alien among these rough men; he would adjust himself to the hard conditions; he would be friends with the people of Miner's Rest.

At last the midnight lay still, drowned in white moonshine about him. The winds had fallen into that low pathos with which they dream among the pines. Philip came to a standstill. The idea of going down into the cabin among the malodors and the heavy snores of the

sleepers was doubly repugnant to-night. He threw himself at the foot of an ancient pine, and, overcome by the long stress of emotion, was soon fast asleep.

He awoke with a start. The gray dawn was struggling in among the wood shadows. The day would soon be filling sky and air and earth with life and song and joy. Philip leaped suddenly to his feet. The last night had swept over him in one great flooding memory. He went to the edge of the pines and gazed out on the wide scene. Below him lay the little mining settlement, with its straggling pine-boxes of houses, its groups of huddled log-cabins, its smelting works, and its frequent unsightly dumps of gray and red soil. Then he turned to gaze at the Mountains. His eyes swept that mighty circuit with new, joyful recognition. Mountains are responsive to one's mood. At Colorado Springs they had revealed themselves to Philip Fallowes, grand, beneficent, sympathetic; at Miner's Rest they had seemed to him menacing, alien, implacable. But he saw now with another vision. The vast bulks, the soaring heights, the solemn presences, were before him in all their awful majesty, in all their mysterious beauty. His gaze followed as they climbed to the far, lonely skies — climbed by way of fair, sunny foot-hill terraces, and gracious woods, and cañons, gay with flowers, and flashing creeks, by way of dark mountain wildernesses and frowning precipices and piled rocky ledges, to the far timber line, to the dazzling whiteness of the eternal snows. He had seen all this before, but he had seen it under the paralysis of his homesickness and despair. It had been to him — that great Rocky Mountain vision — an implacable force, an infinite, savage desolation. He saw it now with new meanings and interpretations, a grandeur and a glory beyond all reach of words.

Then, in a moment, the whole scene was erased by swift, smarting tears. He was thinking of the night again, and saying softly to himself:

“You cannot hear across the silence and the distance, but I shall keep my covenant — God helping me!”

He went down to Miner’s Rest in that new-risen day, the same and yet another. Tall, young, strong-limbed, he made, in his flannel suit, a striking figure, if any one in that rude, toiling world had cared to notice it.

That morning young Fallowes shouldered pick and spade and started once more on his quest for the treasure sealed, from the foundations of the world, in the deep vaults of the Rocky Mountains.

XII

RUNNING HIM OUT

SOMETHING was evidently going on! It was the hour for the afternoon shift in the Good-Luck Mine. A large company from the settlement had congregated about the shaft, on the edge of the wilderness, less than a mile from Miner's Rest.

A rich lead had been unearthed, and the owners were pushing the work, sanguine of success. The plateau, left for untold ages to its beautiful wilderness growths of flowering thickets and tangled creepers, presented the riddled, defaced, unsightly area which characterizes a newly opened mining region.

But business of the ordinary kind was evidently not the purpose which had drawn the motley crowd together. It consisted largely of grimed, slouch-shouldered, toil-worn men. There was a scant sprinkling of women. Some of these were bareheaded; others wore handkerchiefs or hats, evidently snatched in haste, and adjusted by their wearers on the way to the shaft. Some Mexicans, with bright blankets draped about their small, wiry figures, lent the scene effective values in the way of color. It must have been evident to a dull perception that some mischief was brewing. A rostrum had been improvised out of a tar-barrel. One orator after another ascended this and delivered a brief speech, much emphasized by

mining slang and fervid gesticulation. The dingy, gaping crowd gradually enlarged by accretions to its outskirts. The volume of tone from the tar-barrel expanded to reach the widening circle. The mood of the audience grew more excited and angry as the heated oratory proceeded.

Yet the lack in all the speeches of definite or weighty charges must have struck a shrewd listener. The talk was adroitly adapted to the prejudices and passions of the hearers. It was evidently aimed at some person or persons who had given offence, perhaps involuntarily, in a community with keen susceptibilities and accustomed to prompt resentments.

"We've no occasion, my friends," began one speaker, a huge-fisted, brawny fellow with a bush of thick, unkempt beard, "for your high an' mighty tenderfoot in this locality. Airs that are insults, looks that are sneers, ways o' carryin' one's self in the presence of others that call for a pistol to leap lively from the belt of a man o' sperit, can't be put up with forever in this locality. No, sirs! The people are not of the meek and meesly stripe that will bear long with goin's on of that color. You're the kind of crowd, too, when your mind is made up to a course of action, that carries it out all-fired quick. Yes, sirs! Dilly-dallyin' ain't the tune that wins high in this latitude. When you decide it's healthy for a man to clear out of these diggin's, you know how to show him the back door without sayin' 'By your leave!'"

Hearty applause greeted these truculent remarks and somewhat mixed metaphors, in the midst of which the perspiring orator descended the rostrum. His speech was fairly representative of the temper and intellectual quality of several which followed.

Then a speaker of a different type appeared. He was a small, wiry, smooth-faced man. After mounting the barrel, he put his hands in his pockets and surveyed the crowd with a cool, self-complacent stare. He had never spoken to young Fallowes; he had only seen him occasionally as he passed on the street; but he had certain political ambitions, and it was always his aim to be in evidence when there was a chance for oratorical display; he was quick to seize the temper of an audience and to strike the grandiloquent key.

"My friends," he began, his tongue "glib and oily," "it appears that I have somehow been makin' a great mistake regardin' you. I have been lookin' upon you here at Miner's Rest as brave pioneers in the march of civilization; fellin' the forests, fightin' the wild beasts, and facin' all sorts of hardships and privations and toils in layin' the foundations of future mighty cities, and searchin' out the wealth sleepin' in this Rocky Mountain soil. I am free to confess that your work has seemed to me the noblest that men can set their hearts and hands on doin'. I thought such high courage, such scorn of difficulties, and such mighty achievements must cover your names with glory and earn the eternal gratitude of your country!

"But I've learned, within the last few weeks, that I was mistaken. There's somebody — a young stranger from the ends of the earth — who's appeared among us, with high swellin' airs and graces, who means to reverse all this. Brave men, takin' their lives in their hands, facin' awful perils by field and flood, toilin' with strained muscles and sweatin' brows, ain't the sort for him. In his eyes you're a hard, vulgar, rude-tongued crowd. You don't put on the varnish thick; you ain't got the

polish of drawin'-rooms; you're jest common clay, good for nothin' but to lie down and let your betters walk, rough-shod, over you! That, so far as I understand it, is what this new party has come to teach us, and is a mild statement of what all his looks an' acts an' bearin' are intended to express.

"Now, all I have to say in conclusion is, it remains for Miner's Rest to say how long this nonsense — this outrage and insolence, rather — is goin' on; how long, my friends, it will be before you, men of spirit and self-respect, rise up and take the measures you understand so well in dealin' with it sharply an' effectively!"

This speech made more impression than any which had preceded it. Hoarse, angry exclamations, profanity, profuse and fervid, began to voice the waxing sentiment.

"Run out the tenderfoot! What's he loafin' round here for, anyhow?"

"One of your Eastern swells, not condescendin' to speak to his betters any more'n to dogs under his feet. Run him out, I say, an' have a little fun over the job, too!"

The crowd was fast becoming a mob.

At this moment there was a diversion.

A group was seen hurrying breathlessly toward the company around the shaft, and which probably now numbered more than a hundred people. The group was composed of a tall, stoop-shouldered, light-haired man, a small, slender woman making desperate efforts to keep up with his rapid stride, and a child in his arms. Occasionally he slackened his pace and made an eager signal to the crowd. As he drew near, everybody recognized him; he was one of the oldest settlers at Miner's Rest.

"It's Abner Baynes with his wife an' little darter," spoke up one man to his neighbor, after a long, curious stare. "Looks as though the man had lost his wits!"

As the miner drew within hearing, he held the child up eagerly.

"Jest look at her, will you?" he shouted hoarsely. "She's got suthin' to say here, if you'll give her a chance!"

The shout penetrated to the centre of the crowd. By this time the appearance of the new-comers, the urgency of the speaker, and the strangeness of the request, had aroused general curiosity.

"This promises some fun, boys," spoke up a wag in a loud voice. "Let the baby mount the barrel!"

The crowd fell apart, and—a spectacle for curious stares and a world of rough and amused comments—the tall, stoop-shouldered man, the small, shrinking woman in a faded gray gown, and a child with big, astonished eyes passed through the human lane opened up to them.

The miner placed the girl in his wife's arms, said something to the latter, receiving a quick, responsive nod, and sprang on the barrel. The late sunlight struck across his scant beard and his long, thin face. He was evidently quite unused to speaking in public; he stretched his neck forward and gave his trousers an awkward twitch.

"I've jest heered, my friends," he began in an unsteady voice, while a breathless hush fell upon the audience, "that you're debatin' about runnin' out this new party that's appeared among us of late. Now I ain't here to argue ag'in that with you. But I've got a little story to tell, and you wouldn't understand what Rachie has to say without I'd spoke fust.

"It's only last week that I went over to the blacksmith's at Injin Ford to get a little job done. I took Rachie along on horseback, — not dreamin' o' danger, — and set her down to play in the grass and flowers. The blacksmith and I fell into a discussion on politics, and Rachie wandered off to the creek, jest where it gets deeper, below the ford. She must have got to playin' on the edge of the bank where the slope is steep, and — all to once she wasn't playin' on that bank any more!

"She gave one wild shriek as she fell in. That young stranger you're down on was a passin' on a mustang, and he heered her. He was off that animal's back and down to the creek quicker'n chain lightnin'; he see a little dark head" — the speaker's voice faltered — "and it was right in the current that goes — not far off — to Goblin Falls; he struck out for that head; he had a struggle for it, — the current's swift there, you know, — but he clutched the hair at last and made for the shore.

"It was awful suddent on me when he appeared with Rachie, her eyes shet tight, her head hangin' to one side, her face white as the dead, and both of 'em drenched to the skin.

"When I see her like that, I hadn't any more life left in me than a stone; but he shouted out: 'She isn't dead, man! We must get to work and get her out of this, quick!'

"He was as good as his word, and the blacksmith — he helped. We got her close to the forge-fire, and that young man went to work lively, rubbin' her limbs, turnin' her over, and doin' heaps of things to bring her to. It seemed hours, though they said it wasn't many minutes, afore Rachie opened her eyes and stared, and when she see me she smiled, and then I knew it wasn't

a little drowndid girl I'd have to carry home to her mother that night.

"Now, my friends, when I heered, a little while ago, that you was a-talkin' of runnin' this young feller out, I said to myself, and I think you'll all agree with me, 'Now, Abner Baynes, you'll be the cussedest sneak in all Miner's Rest if you don't set right off with Rachie to Good-Luck shaft and tell this story jest as it happened, and then let her make her little speech for the man who saved her life.' Some of you that hears me is fathers and mothers, and knows what it would mean for us to have that prattlin' little voice still, and never hear the busy little feet trudgin' round the house ag'in; and you will be able to calkilate how Rachie's marm and I must feel toward that young stranger."

Then an effective little drama ensued. The crowd watched, silent, breathless, while the speaker bent down and lifted the child from her mother's arms. The latter had been whispering something in Rachie's ears while her father was talking, and she had listened with quick intelligence, and nodded her head several times, and repeated some words to her mother. The afternoon was by this time growing late. The sun swept its long, crimson shafts over the motley crowd of rough men and faded women gathered around the mouth of the shaft. The ancient mountains gazed down, far, solemn, inscrutable, on the little human drama going on at their feet.

Rachel Baynes was not what one would call a pretty child. She had a chubby figure, a square, red-cheeked face, with a bit of irregular nose, and she had been snatched up and borne off in such haste that her thick black hair was one mass of small rings and big tangles. But her eyes redeemed everything. They had a rich

hazel tint, and were the brightest, merriest child's eyes in the world.

As for her dress, she wore a pink, stiffly starched calico frock, and her little shoes were on the point of bursting out at the toes.

Lifted in the arms of her father, she focussed every gaze as she stared on all those upraised faces. Then a sudden fright overcame her; she turned her head and buried it on her father's shoulder. No studied action could have been so effective as that touch of child-nature.

Baynes whispered to his daughter and patted her back in his awkward man's way. At last she lifted her head, turned her face to the crowd once more, reached out her fat little hands; her red cheeks were puffed with her effort to speak, and when the shrill, faltering, infantile voice piped up, the rustle of a leaf might have been heard in the stillness.

"Pwease don't wun him out! Pwease to wet him sta-a-y!" The last monosyllable was a long-drawn crescendo.

Some of the women drew the corners of their shawls to their eyes. Others were seen shaking their heads and talking with great fervor to their husbands. The men looked at each other helplessly. It was perfectly evident that the mood of the mining shaft had undergone a softening change; but it was half ashamed of its own better feeling, and needed somebody to articulate this in a tactful way.

The wag who had been the first to propose that Rachie should address the crowd grasped the situation. He was a youngish man, with an abundance of reddish beard, a shrewd face, and a humorous twinkle in his eye.

He made a sign to Baynes. Rachie was speedily trans-

ferred to the arms of her mother, and the wag mounted the tar-barrel.

"My friends," he said, stroking his beard in a leisurely way, "we folks up here in the Rocky Mountains may not be the most polished and high-toned people in the world, but a Western crowd has al'ays been famed for its gallantry to the female sect. You've heered Rachie's speech. It was short and to the p'int. I move that we wind up this business by givin' her three cheers."

These remarks were most happily adapted to the hour and the audience. The man who made them was accustomed to dealing with Western mobs.

The forest rang with the full-volumed cheers, and the echoes sent them rioting back.

Philip Fallowes would not be run out of Miner's Rest that day.

XIII

THE SMALL BOY'S PART IN THE DRAMA

THE scene at the mining shaft took place only two days after Philip had that memorable night in the pine foot-hills. The chief instigators of the movement were his fellow-lodgers at the cabin, whose susceptibilities had been offended by his silence and what they regarded as his insulting obliviousness of their presence and conversation. One of the men had made a bet that "he could get a big roar of laughter out of that solemn dude." The story which was to work this miracle on Philip's risibles was begun after supper. Just as it reached its rib-splitting climax, he coolly rose and, without glance or word for his companions, hurried from the scene. Such overt contempt was not to be endured by men swift to retaliate fancied slight or insult with bowie-knife and revolver. The half dozen resolved themselves into an indignation meeting. Its sequel was the congregation at the mining shaft two days later. Philip Fallowes was not aware for several days, of the incident in which he had so high stake. He had been more or less conscious of curious glances and of what seemed a new interest and friendliness in the manner of certain people toward himself. But he attributed any manifestation of this sort to the change in his own feeling and his expression of it. He had begun to carry out his purpose of

making the best of his surroundings, including their social element; he had shown more of the friendly and cordial side of his nature than was possible when it was under that deadly paralysis of homesickness and despair; he had talked and jested with the men as he came in various contacts with them. Some of these had looked surprised, but, as a rule, the response had been frank and hearty.

Philip had not, of course, the dimmest notion that he had given offence to a soul in the mining community.

The knowledge, when it came, was a stunning surprise, and derived from a most unlikely source. Philip was on his way to the mountains one morning. It was less than a week after the scene at the Good-Luck shaft. He passed a little group of fresh-built pine tenements, looking, from a slight distance and elevation, as though the next mountain-blast might topple them over. In front of one of these was a small boy with a mass of light curly hair, which stood up as though in perpetual defiance of comb and brush, with a soiled apron, ragged trousers, and bare feet. He was blowing a tin trumpet, expending his utmost strength on the hideous noises; but these came to a dead stop when he caught sight of Philip. He threw his toy on the ground and dashed forward to gaze with wide, short-lashed eyes at the stranger, much as he would have done at some novel species of wild animal emerged from his mountain-fastness.

This thought, and the quaint appearance of the child, struck Philip with amusement.

He stopped his stride. "Well, sir," he asked in a grave tone, "what, on the whole, do you think of me, anyhow?"

The boy wriggled his shoulders shyly, but still kept the stare of eyes almost as light as his lashes on Philip. At last he broke out, in a high-pitched, childish key:

"I — I can't make up my mind."

It was Philip's turn to stare now. He suppressed in time a burst of laughter, and his voice was as serious as the boy's when he replied:

"Perhaps I can help you to decide, sir. Will you tell me your name?"

"It's Benny Burrows."

"May I inquire how old you are?"

"I'm past seven," straightening himself importantly at such an advanced record of years.

"Well, Benny Burrows, will you be good enough to state why you find it so difficult a matter to make up your mind regarding me?"

At seven, it is not easy to formulate one's ideas. Benjamin drew a long breath, dropped his head, worked his toes in the sand, then looked up suddenly with a new light in his eyes.

"Be you a tenderfoot? Be you a big, horrid swell? *Be* you?" he repeated, eagerly drawing a little closer.

It was at once apparent to Philip that these terms had their origin in some maturer brain than the questioner's.

"I have never regarded myself in that light. But who says I am all those dreadful things?"

"Oh, everybody — most!"

"But who is 'everybody,' Benny?"

Again the defiant curls went down, and the toes had a large share in the next mental process. The head went up once more.

"They said it at Good-Luck shaft. They said it ever

so many times. I was there and stood close to the barrel, and heered when the men spoke. It was — jolly!”

This began to be something more to the listener. He drew close to the boy now.

“What were they doing at the Good-Luck shaft?”

This time the answer came without any pause.

“Oh, they was goin’ to run you out! There was such a big crowd. They would have done it, too, if it hadn’t been for *her*.”

“Who was ‘her’?”

“I mean Rachie Baynes. Her father and mother brought her as soon as they knew. He made a speech fust on the barrel, and told how you sprung into Injin Creek and ketched her hair jest as she was a-drowndin’, and all you did. Then he took up Rachie, and when she got over bein’ scairt at the crowd, she made a little speech for you. It was so still everybody heered.”

Philip was silent a moment. Then he said: “Benny, my boy, you were close by; you must have heard. Won’t you tell me all Rachie said?”

Again there was a little hesitation. But all the circumstances had powerfully impressed the child’s imagination. After he began, there was no difficulty. The scene, with its vivid dramatic power, all came back. He imitated Rachie’s gestures; he repeated her speech — word for word — with the infantile voice and lisps.

Not many minutes later Philip moved away. He was not sure whether he was dreaming. He had managed to slip a half-dollar into Benny’s hands, resolving that the boy should meet with a larger reward if half-dollars ever again grew plentiful with him, and leaving Benny himself dumb with amazement and delight.

Philip went on his way, thought and feeling in a tumult of rage.

"So they had intended to run him out of Miner's Rest, had they? Beasts! Monsters!" His hot young blood boiled. The whole scene, as the child's few sentences had depicted it, rose before him now,—the angry crowd, the blatant orators, the shameful intent. He had a swift impulse, or rather a hundred, to turn back and shake the dust of Miner's Rest forever from his feet.

Then another picture came up. Little Rachie, in her father's arms, her hands stretched out to the upturned faces, her small, piping voice making its plea for him—more effective with that mob of coarse, angry men than the most finished oratory.

What made him turn blind, and why was he stumbling among the boulders of the gully? He understood when he felt the sudden wet on his cheeks.

Philip did not make much of a success of that day's work. His eager interest in boring mines and locating claims was, for the time, much absorbed in other issues. He remembered, when his fiery indignation had cooled a little, how he had told himself, in the great crisis of his fate, that he had not a friend in all Miner's Rest. One man had proved that Philip was mistaken. Absorbed in other matters, he had scarcely given a thought to his rescue of the child, but he recalled now the scene at the forge, when Baynes had wrung his hand in his own calloused one, and said, with a big, struggling sob:

"You have saved my child's life, young man. If it ever comes about that I can do anything for you, you may count on me to the death."

"And, by Jove, he proved it! The way he set out to help, when he found the mob meant mischief, was heroic!"

said Philip, with a glow of admiration. "His way of doing it, too, was wonderfully shrewd — bringing that little tot to the fore and getting her to speak up for me. The marvel is how such an infant got through with it. Bless her little piping voice! It proved effective, too!"

Then Philip saw himself in imagination hustled out of the town, in the rough fashion of Western mobs. The contemplation was not agreeable. Nobody could tell how far such a mob might go if its prejudices and passions were once aroused.

But aroused for what? Had he dropped down among fools or fiends? All the real charges against him, according to Benny Burrows, who, he knew, had spoken the transparent truth, amounted to "swell," "tenderfoot," and related terms.

By this time Philip was calm enough to see the trivial and ludicrous aspects of the affair. Sitting on a jagged shelf of rock, his pick beside him, a deep, boulder-strewn gulf yawning beneath him, he burst into a roar of laughter which was more than once repeated, and which made the echoes ring around him.

But after the merriment had subsided, Philip fell into a train of serious reflections. The child's — the mob's — words were like a mirror held up to him, in which he could see clearly the impression he had made upon the people about him. No doubt he had held himself aloof from them. In his silence and misery he had never given a consideration to the point of view from which they might be regarding him. He had taken it for granted that they never wasted a thought on him. It appeared, however, that they fancied he was pluming himself on his superiority and bore himself with a hauteur and contempt not to be endured by free-born Americans, who

regarded themselves the peers of any man dwelling on the earth!

Philip had had his lesson. This was evident from his reflections as he gathered up his scant kit of tools that night.

"I have learned some things to-day, if I haven't struck a pocket. But I have made up my mind to hold on awhile longer at Miner's Rest. It will go hard with me if I don't succeed in making some friends among the rough crowd down below."

That very evening Philip went to call on Abner Baynes. He found him in the centre of a small cluster of square, low-roofed log-cabins near the borders of the expanding settlement. At his knock Baynes showed his lank length and profusion of hay-colored, untrimmed beard in the doorway. His face brightened when he recognized his guest. The men grasped each other's hands.

"Well, Baynes, I know all about it!" exclaimed Philip, as soon as he was inside the little, unpainted, plain-furnished room, which yet struck him as pervaded with a subtle atmosphere of home-living which more than atoned for the absence of all elegant belongings.

"Who told you?" asked Baynes eagerly.

"A very small boy who declared himself as Benny Burrows."

The elder man burst into a loud laugh.

"That little rat! I should never 'a' thought of him. I remember now he was standin' round at the shaft, drinkin' in all that was goin' on. He ain't much to look at, but he's got the cutest brain under that big shock o' curls of any boy of his age at Miner's Rest."

"It struck me in that light. It was through him I learned how you kept your promise, and how one man

had the heart and pluck to stand up for me before an angry mob, when I was away in the foot-hills, not dreaming a soul in the community had a grudge against me."

"They're growin' ashamed on't already, and they'll be more so, afore they get through. It was jest one of their blind prejudices. They've no more reason in 'em than a drove o' wild colts, when they get started. But you won't have any more trouble."

Philip's face darkened; he set his jaw hard. Baynes got, for the first time, an inkling of the cause which had aroused the antagonism of some portions of the community.

"If this is a sample of a Western crowd's hospitality, I hope I may be spared any further exhibition of it. If I escaped this time, I owe it all to you, Baynes,—you and Rachie."

All the young pride and haughtiness vanished with the last sentence, and Philip Fallowes's smile was the kind which one remembers.

Baynes's face flushed with paternal pride.

"It was Rachie that did it, after all," he said. "That crowd was gettin' ugly! But the sight of that child, and the way she spoke out, carried everything before it. Young man, it wasn't for nothin' you saved that little darter o' mine!"

"Nothing! She has made me her debtor to the last hour of my life. But what a happy stroke that was! How did it come about — your bringing her upon the scene?"

Baynes shuffled his feet. The man was sitting opposite his guest in a wooden, flag-bottomed chair. Philip occupied the seat of state, the arms and back of which were covered with vari-colored patchwork.

"It all came upon me sudden," he said, bending for-

ward and clasping his big-knuckled hands around his knee. "One of the neighbors bust in and shouted, 'They're goin' to have a big row over to Good-Luck shaft! They're gettin' ready to run out that young snob that's been round here takin' on big airs and carryin' himself above common folks! He's got to be taken down a peg. Make haste, or you'll lose the fun!'"

"I knew at once what was up. I sprang to my feet. 'Now, Abner Baynes,' I said, 'here's your chance! You've got to keep your promise to that young man.'"

"For a second or two I didn't know which way to turn. Then it all came in a flash. I snatched up Rachie, and called to her mother not to stop for life or death. As we hurried on, I told Rachie what she was to say and charged her mother to keep her repeatin' it and never mind what *I* was doin'."

At that instant there was a gurgle of childish laughter in an adjoining room. All the time they had been talking, Philip had heard through the thin board partition sounds which suggested hasty toilet preparations. He saw now, standing in the door, a little square face with the saucy nose and the merry, hazel eyes. The cheeks were a little redder with the scrubbing they had undergone, and the thick rings of hair about the forehead a little less riotous than usual.

As Rachie caught sight of Philip, she gave a scream of childish delight, bounded across the room, and fairly fell against him.

"I said it wight! I said it wight!" she burst out eagerly.

"I know you did. You were the bravest little girl in the world, Rachie, to make that speech before the big crowd of men, and save me from being run out."

He had lifted her in his arms by this time.

"It was cos you dragged me out of the water that day. It was so black and cold!" She shuddered and clung to him.

At that instant Mrs. Baynes appeared on the scene in her newest gown. The small, thin woman had, at the moment, a glow in her faded eyes, on her sallow cheek, which faintly recalled her girlish prettiness. She gave her hand to Philip.

"I want to thank you —" her voice broke.

Philip helped her out quickly. "It is I, Mrs. Baynes, who should do the thanking first and most."

That evening in the log-cabin was a happy one to Philip — the first he had known since life had all changed for him. Rachie snuggled up and babbled to him in her pretty child-fashion. Mrs. Baynes did her best in honor of the occasion. She had an inherited culinary faculty which triumphed over the limitations of her larder; she brought out her spicy soft-gingerbread and served coffee which seemed to the guest more delicious than any which the daintiest china had ever carried to his lips.

They sat long round the small pine table — hosts and guest getting better acquainted. Baynes's shrewd, practical remarks struck Philip.

"You mustn't size up Miner's Rest," he said in his slow, high-keyed voice, "by this fust rough sample you've had of it. I don't want to picter things better than they be; but there's fellers — a good many of 'em, too — with kind hearts and helpin' hands in this community. They ain't polished on the surface, and this kind of life won't be likely to make 'em more so; but you'll find what I say is true, if you jest wait and don't expect too much, and learn to take 'em on the right side,

and they in turn get to know you better. There's rogues and rascals — plenty on 'em — in this settlement. That crowd at the shaft was about the roughest of the lot here; but they had a better side, and showed it when my little girl spoke up to 'em." He glanced tenderly at Rachie.

That night Philip went away with a light heart. He knew there was one roof at Miner's Rest under which his name would always be spoken with grateful affection. The thought seemed to give a fresh atmosphere, a kind of sacredness, to this new, rough world. He had been gaining some new wisdom on the mountain ledges and in the miner's cabin that day.

XIV

AT MINER'S REST

PHILIP FALLOWES had been for more than a year at Miner's Rest. By this time he had ceased to regret his desperate dash for the wild mining regions. He had, indeed, come to regard that as probably the wisest course he could have taken; he had, in short, adapted himself, in a large degree, to the conditions of Rocky Mountain life in a remote and newly opened region.

It goes without saying that this change could not have been effected without many struggles and revulsions of feeling — especially in its earlier stages. The old regrets and depressions would sometimes sweep upon his spirit, and hope, energy, aspiration, would grow faint and slack for a while. When hankerings for the old life and associations returned, he would find the rude existence, the coarse habits, the rough speech of the people about him, almost unendurable. But as the months passed, these feelings recurred less frequently and with less intensity.

Nothing like the drama at the shaft had ever repeated itself. The leaders themselves did not now enjoy the recollection of it. The social sentiments of Miner's Rest toward Philip Fallowes had undergone a vast change — no greater, however, than his own toward the people and the place. The young man and the young community had grown to understand each other better. His real char-

acter had told with the shrewd, impulsive, keenly observant people. He grew familiar with them; learned the Western chaff and slang — sometimes caught himself at it with a grimace, half humorous, half horrified; joked with his companions or did them a good turn, when the occasion offered.

Of course he blundered and made frequent mistakes — this youth of twenty three or four thrown absolutely on his own wits, in such novel circumstances. But he grew wiser with experience. Then what a new school of human nature it was to Philip Fallowes! What lessons those hard, rough-tongued, flannel-shirted miners taught the youth straight from the shades of his University! As he came to know them better, what keen wits, what true hearts, what noble souls, he found among them! Of course there was the other side! Some of the vilest characters of the world are always certain to drift into a young mining community. Philip rode and jested with men who, he had no doubt, would not hesitate to shoot him if they thought he had money enough to make it worth their while.

It was a new experience — probably a very wholesome one for him — to learn how little a man, possessed of youth and health, really needed to have a very comfortable time in this world! He could sleep just as well in his clay-chinked, unplastered cabin as he could in his elegant apartments at Denver. Philip had been wise enough to secure this vacant, low-roomed dwelling near the borders of the settlement and on the way to the foothills. It meant for him quiet, independence, and freedom from a world of unpleasant companionships.

His own necessities were a constant spur to action; he could not afford to be fastidious. Sometimes he did not

know where the next day's meals would come from. It was natural, with his inexperience, he should have taken it for granted that, once among the mountains, he could easily earn enough to defray his much-reduced expenses. At first he had staked his claims and pommelled steadily at the rocks. When these did not prove productive, he turned his hand to anything that offered. He was, for a month, foreman of the Fool's Paradise Mines, three miles from the settlement, and "shift boss" for a fortnight at the Big Rock. In one instance, under financial pressure, he took a man's place for two days at the shaft, and turned the crank which brought up the buckets of ore.

"I could not get much lower down than this!" he said to himself with a grim smile as he took his place at the new post. But his strong sense of the humorous side of the situation soon superseded all other feelings.

"How his classmates of a year ago would stare to see him now!" He broke into a loud laugh. "But I am just as much of a man here—if not more so—than I was last year lounging with you under the elms!" followed the next thought, sane and self-respecting.

Then there was a shout down the shaft. A fresh bucket of ore came up, and Philip had to be spry; and when night came he was too tired for memories; he flung himself down on his hard bed in the cabin, and slept the sound, delicious sleep of healthy young manhood and daily labor.

Of course by this time, he was frequently talked over at the saloons. Some echo of the old dislike and fancied superiority occasionally cropped out, but those who knew him best swore that young Fallowes "was an all-round good feller, and all that talk about his feelin' so tremendous sot up, and better than the next one, was gammon!

Of course he fought shy when it came to the gamblin' and drinkin' an' wuss; but he was devilish quick with his jokes and stories, and these were al'ays so clean a man could go straight hum and repeat 'em to his wife and darters."

Young Fallowes could not be in the atmosphere of such a place — hear the talk which constantly gravitated to one theme, which lent a glowing possibility to every day — without yielding more or less to its contagion. Each morning when he seized his pick and set off for the day's prospecting in some fresh field, he would chink the few silver pieces in his pocket as he reflected there was a chance — among ten thousand, perhaps — that he might return at night, having struck a true vein, a rich man!

All the camps rang the changes on stories of this sort. They give life in the Rocky Mountains the element of surprise, of adventure, of mystery. They touch the imagination with a kind of Aladdin glitter and romance. This possibility of acquiring, in some lucky moment, a grand fortune has an immense power to carry the miner lightly over all the privations and hardships of his life.

No doubt it was this possibility which had more than once induced Philip to abandon his solitary efforts and join a party who were working some abandoned claims in gulches far up in the mountains.

He had a tough experience each time. It blistered his hands and hardened his muscles. They reached "pay dirt" for a while, but the yield was not sufficient to encourage them in continuing the work. The party dispersed to more alluring quarters. Philip's share in the yield helped him over a financial crisis in his affairs.

XV

THE GIRL BY THE FARTHER SEA

FROM the door of his cabin Philip commanded an unbroken view of the Great Range. As he lived in its presence, he grew into closer sympathy and companionship with it. The mountains became to him symbols of something deeper and diviner than themselves. They were to him a world of alluring mystery, of inviolable calm, of elemental strength. He knew the awful secrets of their lonely precipices, their savage wildernesses, their yawning abysses; but he knew also the places where Nature had clothed all the barrenness with her robes of transcendent loveliness; knew where the cañons broke into dazzling miracles of mountain bloom and color, where the creeks shouted their own wild idyls as they trailed and tumbled over the great rocky stairways.

But with his youth and inexperience, plunged suddenly into a new world of novel scenes and excitements, with his imagination susceptible and responsive, with young manhood virile and throbbing in every fibre of his being, Philip Fallowes needed at this time an influence more distinct and penetrating than that of nature, though at her best and noblest, about his life.

He found this — perhaps it would be truer to say he *made* it — in the thought of that young girl, hardly out of her childhood, whom he had met so accidentally and

briefly, and with whom he had walked and talked for a couple of evenings on the piazza of Amoury Roost.

But he was always conscious that at the most critical moment of his life, in the utmost strain of soul and flesh, the thought of her young charm and innocence, of her girlhood's aspirations and ideals, half unconsciously revealed to him, of something nameless in herself which differentiated and set her apart from all young girls he had ever known, had come back with such constraining power and vividness that it had saved him.

Yet his regard for her now was very sane and manly. He had put all that young romance — or thought he had — sternly behind him; he was rather jealously at guard lest any thought or feeling should seem to lower that ideal memory in which he held her.

He never allowed himself to call Dorothy Draycott his "guardian angel," the "star of his life," or any of those phrases worn threadbare by sentimental lovers; he kept all young dreams and fancies from roaming afield in that direction. I think he would have told himself at this time, that if any other man had won her, the fact could make no difference with him; it could not affect his consciousness of what she had been, what she had done for him.

All the same, in his House of Life there was a room set apart and sacred, and a shrine was there, and a young girl's face smiled in it.

Philip Fallowes was not longing at this time to be with Dorothy Draycott; he was striving to live his life bravely, manfully, nobly, *without* her.

There were days — weeks, perhaps — when he hardly thought of her. His life was full of all sorts of practical interests and activities. The air of the West, the exam-

ples about him, the very amplitude of horizon, kindled all his energies, spurred him to incessant activities during the days, and when the nights came, they brought the sound, delicious slumber which opens to the sleeper the gates of no dreamland.

But, in spite of all this, and of his slight personal acquaintance with her, Dorothy Draycott was no mythical creature to Philip Fallows. She was a real entity, a very much alive girl, into the quality of whose young nature his insight had, at the beginning, penetrated sure and deep. His later knowledge of her was derived from a source no less intimate than that of Tom Draycott himself. In the familiar intercourse of their last undergraduate years, Red Knolls and the life there was always coming up in Tom's talk. That extremely clever youth never suspected how adroitly he was led to dilate on this theme. Of course Dorothy's name constantly recurred in Tom's reminiscences; he related endless stories of their childhood. The frolics, the pleasures, the foolish quarrels, which seemed for the moment so serious, and which ended in such swift reconciliations, all made a series of varied, perfectly fascinating pictures to Philip's eager interest. Then revelations followed of a later time, when life was in the first blush of manhood and womanhood, and all these were enfolded in the wonderful, tender, fragrant, home atmosphere of Red Knolls.

One night Philip, in the family's absence, had gone over to dine with his friend. A March rain-storm had raged suddenly in the air. The winds roared like trumpets that call to battle; the rain drove in rattling sheets against the windows.

Of course Draycott would not allow his friend to leave the house that night, and they had one of those long

evenings together which are apt to inspire mutual confidences. As the storm held its way, it started into vivid life that other storm, which would never be laid fast asleep in Tom Draycott's memory. Before he quite knew what he was doing, he was talking about it; and, once begun, he could not stop. That night Philip learned all about the sail in Boston harbor; the hurricane from which the two classmates had barely escaped with their lives, and all Tom's remorseful agony when he returned home and found what those hours had meant for his sister.

In these ways she came back to Philip Fallowes,—the best and most precious thing he had brought out of his past to his pioneer life in the Rocky Mountains.

But a single mastery of one's lower self does not mean that one will always be strong; that he will hold himself continuously to the level of his highest purpose and loftiest endeavor.

Certainly Philip Fallowes was conscious frequently of the downward drag of mood and flesh. At such moments the saloons—even the bar and the gambling-table—attracted the sensuous side of his nature, and the picture was drawn in alluring contrast against a lonely cabin, nearly a mile away on the edge of Miner's Rest.

Then a pair of brown eyes, like no other eyes in the world, which had shone for him first one summer morning in a dim, ancient pine wood, would rise up, and Philip would turn sharply on his heel.

I am not seeking to paint for you, my reader, any flawless hero of romance. If such beings could exist, Philip Fallowes was not one of them; if his ideal was high, he often stood, as all human beings must, rebuked and convicted before it; but when all this has been said,

it still remained true that his life was as unsullied at Miner's Rest as Dorothy Draycott's at Red Knolls.

If this seems a light thing to say, it was *not* a light thing to him who lived it, amid the habits, the environments, and in the moral atmosphere of a mountain mining-camp, with tawdry, brazen women seeking to beguile the handsome youth, — lived it amid frequent contact with hardened and vicious men, to whom all that was pure and noble in him was an offence and a rebuke.

XVI

SOME SMALL HAPPENINGS

YOUNG Fallowes visited the Bayneses' oftener than he did anybody else at Miner's Rest. No other place in the settlement held for him that home atmosphere he found when he crossed the door of their cabin. Rachie would run, shrieking with delight, whenever the tall, broad-chested figure and the strong, handsome, brown bearded face appeared in the doorway. The black rings would lie in pretty, tangled confusion about the roguish little face, with its red cheeks and bit of saucy nose. Her mother's faded eyes would light up with pleasure as she said, with a little air and tone of apology:

"If we'd only known you was comin', Mr. Fallowes, Rachie's hair should have been combed and she should have had on her Sunday-go-to-meetin' frock."

And Philip would answer in his kindly way, and yet with that indescribable air which almost struck Mrs. Baynes dumb betwixt diffidence and admiration:

"I beg you will not mind, Mrs. Baynes. I like Rachie best just as she is; I have come around to see if you can spare her for an hour or two's ride. My bronco, at the door, is a sure-footed little beast."

A few minutes later the two — Rachie in her new hat, sitting in front of Philip Fallowes and lifted to a seventh heaven of happiness — started for the cañons, the mother

watching them from the front door, a pleased smile on her faded face.

Philip was very fond of Rachie. She whisked her little black-ringed head round to him every few moments for a smile, and kept up a strain of soft infantile prattle, with little drawings of breath and merry breaks of laughter. They entered a cañon, — a green, flowery nook, with a bit of creek which sang and dimpled, and was gone one moment and came to light the next, among the boulders. The bronco's clumsy feet crushed the mats of yellow and white bloom as they rode.

"I'm glad we comed here, you and I and the bronco, Mr. Fallowes," said Rachie, and her voice had the thin, lisping quality of early childhood. "I should like to come every day."

"I am afraid in that case we should grow tired of it, Rachie. If we see things every day, they grow, after a while, an old story."

"Not things you love. I never get tired of Nanny — she's my doll, you know; I want to see her ever so many times every day. I shouldn't never get tired of *you*, neither."

"Ah, but you can't be sure of that."

"Oh, yes, I can! It's cos I love you very much, Mr. Fallowes."

She whisked her little head around again, and the merry eyes danced as she looked him in the face while she made this frank avowal.

"It is a very long time since anybody said those words to me."

The child could not formulate, but she distinctly felt, the tone of sadness which crept into his voice. It drew out some more emphatic assertion of feeling on her part.

"I can't tell you how much, but if I had a measure, it would reach away and away to the stars."

"Dear me! How delightful!"

"But it never could reach quite so far, you know. Johnnie Willis has a kite; he can make it go up ever and ever so high, till you can't see it, but he says it never touches the stars."

"Johnnie is right. But you and I wouldn't want to measure love in that way. It is something to be felt, not seen. You can understand that?"

The little restless head was still a minute or two, as she gravely pondered the question. Then it turned quickly around, with a gleam of assenting intelligence in her eyes.

Philip wondered whether it was the rudimentary coquette which made her say now, glancing up at him out of the corners of her eyes:

"I want to know how much you love *me*, now?"

"Oh, very much indeed!"

"But jest how much?"

"Well — let me see! I love you better than any little girl in the world, my Rachie," and he drew her closer to him.

She gave a long sigh of ineffable content. Then, with a young child's swift change of mood, she cried out:

"Oh, do you see the little bird on that red flower? There! He's flyin' off now."

Philip drew his rein; he was off the bronco in a moment. The flower to which Rachie had pointed was a fiery-scarlet painter's brush in the midst of tall spikes of blue larkspur. The child's eyes sparkled as he placed the gay blossom in her hands.

This special ride occurred about a year after the scene

at the shaft. There were a good many others before and afterward. They gave Philip as much pleasure as they did Rachie. The childish freshness, the pretty, guileless talk, made a warmth about his own heart; and the supper under the pine roof, with which it closed, and at which Mrs. Baynes accomplished wonders with slender materials, was a happy affair for all concerned.

Then there was Benny Burrows. That small boy, with his old-man's gravity and his shrewd little brain under his seven-years-old curls, was as devoted to Philip — in a different way — as Rachie Baynes herself.

Events proved, too, that it had been the most fortunate hour of his life when he threw down his tin trumpet and started off to confront young Fallowes as he came in sight.

The next time they met, Philip took the initiative.

"Well, Benny Burrows, have you by this time made up your mind regarding me?"

"Yes, I have!" prompt and pugnacious. Benny had rushed from the cabin on catching sight of Philip.

"What is it, then?"

"You ain't no tenderfoot nor big, horrid swell, and I'll give the first boy who says you be, a big thrashin', if he is twice as tall as me!"

The boy clenched his grimed hands. A brick-red flushed through his tan.

"O Benny, I wouldn't try that on!" laughing to himself. "You couldn't change a boy by thrashing him; he would have his own opinion all the same when you got through. I am sure so bright a boy as you must see that."

The round head went down; the bare toes were the color of the sand they wriggled in. Philip watched

silently the signs of the mental process going on in the childish brain. At last the result articulated itself.

"Yes, I see. But it don't make no diff'runce, for all that."

"Why doesn't it?"

"Because" — Benny's voice, when he was in earnest, always sounded as though he had a cold — "you don't care about his changin' his opinions, but it does you good to thrash a feller when you're all-fired mad at him."

Here was human nature — in small! Philip could not stay to discuss the ethics of the question. Benny put his hard little hand in his friend's palm, and the two walked some distance together. This afterward became their habit.

The friendship thus inaugurated grew into intimacy. Benny learned the way to Philip's cabin, and it soon became to him the pleasantest place in the world. His own home was not all that could be desired; he had a step-mother much burdened with cares for her own small brood.

Philip resolved that his young friend, with a reasoning faculty and a native shrewdness which seemed almost preternatural in one of his years, should have his chance. He sent him to the only child's school at Miner's Rest. The fact that he had inspired an interest in such high quarters had the natural result. Benny's importance and comfort were much advanced in his own household.

XVII

IN ASPEN HOLLOW

It happened — that which I am about to relate — after Philip Fallowes had been nearly a year and a half at Miner's Rest. He had resolved to try his luck that day in a new locality, a higher altitude than he had yet attempted, but one where men had, within a few weeks, struck rich veins among the ragged ravines and gullies.

He started off in the coolness before sunrise; he drank great draughts of that dry, delicious Colorado air. "What an infinite joy it was just to live and breathe in this world — under such conditions, of course! Why could not all humanity, struggling, wearied, toiling, on the levels, leave the long, fool's chase and come up to the mountains and breathe this air and rejoice in this freedom?"

These questions, and a host of others, crowded his thoughts as he made his upward way. The red lilies shone thick, like kindling fires; the columbine trailed its gold among the ferns — a part of that gorgeous tapestry which nature had flung over her broken, lower stairways that led far away to beetling precipices and stony silences.

And to Philip Fallowes, responsive to the buoyant, exhilarating air, to the expanding horizons, any surprise, any good fortune, seemed possible. He did not mind the climb, which cost him hours; he worked with a will

that day; he pounded the rocks, he picked the crevices. When he returned at night, he was no richer for climb or toil, but something of the glad, uplifting mood of the morning stayed with him; he could not feel disheartened; he found himself again and again breaking into snatches of old Harvard songs.

But he was glad to take the shortest cut to his cabin. This led by a newly opened trail through Aspen Hollow, a wide, shallow depression on the last hill-slope. The scant growths of trees to which the place owed its name made a golden glow of leafage against the September sky. Philip, tired as he was, paused a moment to admire the color.

His return glance was caught by a large object lying just on the edge of the steep slant of trail he was about to descend. Philip approached it curiously. As he drew near, the thing resolved itself into the shape of a human figure. It lay motionless as the dead. A much-worn cap had fallen over the face. The clothes — a miner's garb — were dingy and ragged. The whole spectacle gave one an impression of helplessness, misery, and degradation.

The figure was a tall one, stretched at full length on its back. Philip bent down and softly removed the cap. The dusk was beginning to deepen now, but he recognized the face with a glance. Everybody at Miner's Rest knew the ragged, dust-colored beard, the pallid, yellowish skin, the pale, watery eyes, the loose-jointed figure, with the slow, uncertain gait. The man had preceded Philip some time at the settlement. If he had ever inclined to leave it, he was too broken-down in energy and ambition to make the necessary effort. The chief business of his life was to get as many drinks as he could;

he succeeded so well that on most days he was pretty thoroughly intoxicated; he worked in the mines intermittently; he spent most of his days hanging around the saloons, his hands in his pockets, listening to the talk with a feeble smile, always ready to accept a dram, — a mere wreck of manhood, sinking by steady gradations to his grave.

The miners made him the butt of their jokes and witticisms. Caleb Crafts — they were much in the habit of calling him Cale in the saloons, the mining parlance always inclining to ellipses — was not pugnacious, and took all the jokes and rough satire with a kind of tolerant good-nature.

When Philip had first caught sight of the man, he had regarded him as only one more piece of human driftwood caught at Miner's Rest.

Once or twice, however, as the paths of the two had crossed, or Crafts had spoken in Philip's hearing, it had struck him that the man showed, through all his moral and physical lapse, some signs of better early training than many of his associates.

Occasionally, too, he had caught the dulled eyes regarding him with a gleam of interest, as though some memory or association had stirred in his muddled brain. But the two had never exchanged a word.

Philip was strongly inclined to the opinion that the man was dead, — apoplexy or heart-failure, the sequence, no doubt, of persistent drams.

He fingered the bony hand lying on the chest. It was limp, but scarcely felt like that of a dead man. He forced himself to push up the ragged sleeve and feel the pulse. There was a feeble, irregular throb.

Young Fallowes straightened himself and surveyed the

scene before him with feelings about equally balanced between pity and disgust.

“What a miserable sight it was! What use was there in carrying about a carcass like that, when the sole object of the man who inhabited it was to get all the liquor he could guzzle down! Whose business was it, anyhow, to try and bring him back to the life he had made such a mess of? His old cronies down there in the saloons, just beginning their evening carouse, would probably settle the matter in short order. ‘Let the old toper hustle for himself! If he can sleep off his spree up there on the rocks, nobody is goin’ to prevent. If he never comes out of it, it’ll be the best thing that could happen to him.’”

Philip Fallowes, standing there in the dusk above that supine figure, was wearied with the day’s tramp and toil. Every clean instinct of his soul and body recoiled at the spectacle before him.

“There was nothing he could do for that man.”

With this conclusion he turned on his heel and hurried out of the hollow.

Before he reached his cabin, however, other thoughts had followed swiftly.

“After all, the thing stretched out on the trail was a human being. That meant a soul somewhere behind, beyond, all the debasement and misery.”

Then the curious, wistful glances with which Caleb Crafts had several times regarded him came up afresh. He moved uneasily; he wished he were not so deadly tired; he wondered if he should feel quite comfortable if he learned later that the feeble life had flickered out in the cold and silence up there on the stones. “There might be a touch of frost at midnight. Would he like

to remember he had turned and passed by, when it was possibly a question of life or death for a man?"

Then, suddenly, Philip Fallowes was revolving something else.

"What would *she* think, what would *she* say, if she were here at this moment?"

Less than half an hour later, Fallowes might have been seen trundling a wheelbarrow up the slant of trail that led almost to his cabin door. In the deepening twilight, in the rough, lonely way, nobody was likely to observe him. The men to whom his errand would have been a puzzling problem, a subject of infinite jest, were at that hour in the saloons, engrossed in faro and roulette.

The figure still lay supine and motionless when he reached it. It was well for Fallowes that the humorous aspects of the situation appealed to him strongly now.

"You are not a hilarious or an odoriferous object, Caleb Crafts," he accosted the unconscious figure. "I should never, for my own part, have craved this sort of proximity, but the thing has come in my way, and I am not going to shirk it."

He raised the tall, limp form in his strong, young arms, placed it on the wheelbarrow as comfortably as the limitations admitted, drew a long breath of relief, and seized the handles of the vehicle. Nothing had seen — nothing but the stars flocking to their early night-watches above the foot-hills.

The transfer was safely accomplished. Philip staggered with his burden across the threshold of his cabin, laid it on his own bed, wrapped it in a warm blanket, snatched another for himself, and set out at once for the pine coppice, where he had beforehand made up his mind to sleep.

This part of his programme had not cost him the least sacrifice. He would have liked to pass many of his nights in that glorious air, under those cloudless skies, if some inherited instinct had not made him feel that a man with a roof and a bunk had no right to affront the habits of civilization by adopting those of savagery. But he was always ready for an excuse to exchange his own bed for the brown, fragrant one nature spread for him on her pine needles.

The coppice was only about three minutes' walk from the cabin. He threw himself down under the tall, thick trees, gathered his blanket about him, vaguely wondered whether there was, in all the Rocky Mountains, a man so tired as himself, before he dropped into an abyss of dreamless slumber which lasted for eight hours.

When he awoke, the sun was kindling in the tops of the tall pines over his head; the air was full of the splendid tonic of the Colorado sunrise. For a moment, however, everything was steeped in quiet, as though nature had paused in breathless prayer amid the dew and fragrance of her breaking day.

Philip sat up after his bath of delicious sleep, and felt himself a part of the morning's strength and joy. His vision was crowded for a moment by glimpses between the great pine boles of jagged lines and broken contours, of dark patches of firs and cedars, and rounding curves of foot-hills. Then, with a start and smothered cry, he bounded to his feet. He had remembered Caleb Crafts, and why he had been sleeping under the pines that night.

When he reached his cabin, he found his guest in the attitude in which he had left him. There could be no question now that the man was alive and sleeping off his debauch amid loud snores.

Philip stood still and gazed on him with conflicting feelings; he had little doubt that loud breathing would have been silenced forever if the man had been left unsheltered on the trail through the night; he wondered whether he had done him a service to save so miserable a life. Then he reflected, that was, after all, none of his business.

The sunrise struck through the cabin window and slanted across the face of the slumbering man. Philip drew closer and bent over it. In the revealing light he tried to interpret what the face was originally intended to express, what it might have been before drink had dulled and debased it. The ragged line of thick, light hair stood stiffly up from a well-formed forehead. The skin had the yellow, sickly hue of prolonged dissipation. The features were gaunt; the lower portion of the face was partly concealed by a light, yellowish, much-neglected beard. The gazer detected no cruel, vicious lines in the weak, sad, defeated face. He could imagine it had been a pleasant, even an attractive one, in its youth. But the later autobiography was writ so large that all might read.

Philip placed a chair and fresh water by the bedside. Should Crafts, he reflected, awake during his absence, he would be too dazed and weak to leave the cabin. With his own appetite clamorous by this time, he set off for breakfast.

XVIII

THE SOUL OF A MAN

PHILIP was unable to return before noon. A glance showed him that his lodger had not left. He was not certain whether to be glad or sorry. A little further investigation made it evident that the man had been awake not long before. He had quaffed deep draughts from the pitcher and made an effort to bathe his face; he was now in a natural slumber.

Philip moved on to the next room and set about starting a fire; he had often blessed his stars that his boy's experience at fishing and camping in the woods had taught him the secret of making delicious coffee and broiling steak and game to a nicety. This skill, combined with various recent culinary experiments, made him largely independent of the indigestible fare at the refectories of Miner's Rest.

After he had started the fire, he set about further preparations for a meal, whistling low and intermittently, thinking all the time of his strange lodger.

There was nothing to do but wait on events.

The thought had just crossed his mind, when he caught a sound, a stir, in the next room. He turned to the door and met the gaze of Crafts. There was a look of intelligence in the man's eyes.

Philip came toward the bed. "Well, sir, judging from

the length of your nap, you must be pretty thoroughly rested by this time."

There was a contagious quality in this cheery, off-hand address.

It was followed by a prolonged silence, during which Crafts kept staring curiously at the strong, handsome young face above him.

At last he asked, in a slow, bewildered voice:

"What place is this?"

"It is my palace — cabin — den, or several other names you may fancy to call it."

"How did I get here?"

"Allow me to take my turn at the questioning. Do you know who I am?"

"Yes; I know that," stirring a little. "You're that young Fallowes who the fellers used to say was a leetle too high-toned for this climate."

Philip lifted his eyebrows. "I understand those were the first impressions of Miner's Rest regarding me. Let us hope it may have reason to change them."

Crafts made no sign, whether of assent or dissent, to this remark.

"I want to know how I came here."

He returned to his first question with a kind of dogged insistence.

"Well, then, if nothing short of the bare statement is going to satisfy you, I brought you here."

"*You* brought me here?"

"Precisely."

"How did you do it?"

"In the only vehicle of which I am at this time the happy possessor."

"What was that?"

"A wheelbarrow."

"You brought me here — your own self — on a wheelbarrer?"

"Yes."

"Where did you find me?"

"What an enormous instinct you must have for cross-questioning a witness! You were a quarter of a mile above here, on the new trail which leads down into Aspen Hollow, where I found you."

"Oh, yes! I remember now." Crafts spoke half to himself, with a kind of thin, high-pitched drawl. "I'd had some stiff drinks at Mullins'. The fellers from Gordon's mine had come down flush from their last find and treated all round — straight whiskey. I'd set out to go home — must have mistook the trail and gone all to pieces when I started back. I was clean done for — dead drunk!"

He addressed himself again to Philip.

"There could be no question about that!"

"And you happened to be passin' by and found me lyin' there."

"You seem perfectly acquainted with the facts."

"How did you come there?"

"I was on my way down from Ragged Ledge. I had been prospecting round there all day."

"Was you all alone?"

"All alone."

"And you got your wheelbarrer, trundled it up the trail, heaved me up and aboard, and brought me down here?"

"That's it again, precisely."

"I must have been a powerful heavy load."

"My muscles are pretty well seasoned by this time. There was no special difficulty in handling you."

A pause ensued. Crafts kept his steady stare on Philip and rubbed his gaunt hands with a faint nervous movement. At last he said, with a little change of tone, "What did you do all that for?"

"What did I do it all for?" Philip echoed the words half to himself. "I thought you would, in all probability, be dead before morning, if I left you to lie all night on the trail."

"That was nothin' to you — jest a poor dog stretched there on the trail, dead drunk!"

"Well, that is your way of putting it. Mine was somewhat different."

"That's jest what I'm cur'us to know — the diff'runce."

"I said to myself: 'There lies a man, and that means a human soul, if he has done his best to shame and spoil it.' So I acted promptly. That is about all there is of it, Crafts. I must see about that coffee."

Philip hurried from the room, not sorry for an excuse to end the conversation.

Less than two minutes later, he heard a loud groan, followed by a wrenching sob. He stepped quickly to the door. A sight met his eyes which he will never forget. Crafts was sitting up in bed, his big, bony fingers locked together on the blanket, while great tears were streaming down his haggard cheeks. He did not attempt to wipe them off; his whole frame shook and writhed helplessly under the storm of sobs, which indicated some sudden moral and physical upheaval in the man's nature.

The sight of the tall, haggard figure swaying back and forth in the clutch of overpowering emotions, would have struck a gazer either on its ludicrous or pathetic side. The latter appealed at once to young Fallows, standing in the doorway surveying his guest, who was either

unaware of, or indifferent to, his presence. Indeed, the feeling with which one regards such a scene is pretty certain to be a test of character. Any man, too, is likely to take a deeper interest in another whose life he has just saved. Philip turned away and came back shortly with a big bowl of strong coffee, whose steaming fragrance filled the cabin.

"Come, Crafts," rang out the strong, manly tones, "it won't do to go on like this. Don't you know it will break you all up, man?"

Caleb's shaking hands reached eagerly for the bowl. He drained the contents in a few moments. Then he struck his sleeve across his eyes, drawing deep, sobbing breaths, while the stimulus of the hot coffee penetrated every fibre of his system.

"It ain't for myself; it's what you did for me; it's what you *did!*" he exclaimed, half apologetically, and with an awkward gesture that yet had a certain pathetic dignity.

And again Philip wondered, as he looked at the shaking figure in the ragged brown jeans, whether he had really done the man a favor in saving his life.

But under the sway of strong emotions and the stimulus of the coffee, Crafts kept on, in his nasal, excited voice:

"A heap o' rags an' a whiskey-soaked carcass, an' you comin' along, spry an' proud, head up an' shoulders back, an' when you come to the holler you stopped an' see what was lyin' there! There ain't another soul in all Miner's Rest who'd 'a' done it," he continued after a little pause, and with a solemn emphasis of conviction. "They'd have said, — most on 'em, 'Let the old cuss go! Won't be hangin' round the bar for a treat from the next

comer who happens to be flush.' And them that's got more feelin' would have looked kind o' sorry for a minit before *they* had their say, 'Poor dog! Drunk himself to death! It was sure to come. Better now, perhaps, than later.' I ain't complainin' or sayin' 'twasn't gospel truth," he added with a kind of pitiful apology.

He swept his ragged sleeve across his face again, and resumed, more to himself than to Philip, for he was growing excited and voluble:

"You'd never exchanged a word with me. There was no more reason you should care for me than for a wild Injin, an' yet — wall — here I am, jest waked up in your cabin, where I've been lyin', snug an' warm all night, to find you've saved my life!"

The man's amazed, passionate gratitude surprised and touched Philip. But he saw that a reaction must soon follow the tremulous, overwrought condition of mind and body.

"I think you and I, Crafts, better cut our talk short here," interposed the voice, which, through all its kindness, had the note of personal force and decision. "I must be off for the rest of the day. If you want more coffee, you will find it piping hot, and food beside, in the next room. Don't bother yourself about what I may have done for you. The things you want now are a steadier pulse and a clearer brain, and the shortest road to them is another half day's solid sleep."

Philip had little time to himself that afternoon. He was carried off, soon after he left his cabin, by a company of miners who had just come in, wildly excited over what they regarded as an amazing find in Boulder Ravine, ten miles away. The men were going over next day to exploit the region. They persuaded him to accompany

them. He learned, a good deal to his surprise, that some of the party had a regard for his opinions of promising outlooks and dips of mineral veins.

He went, with the others, to a grove of cedars less than a mile from the settlement, where the plans could be matured for the opening of the ground about Boulder Ravine. Here he handled the rich specimens and listened to the glowing reports of high assays, all of which, it is needless to say, made a powerful impression.

Yet as Philip returned alone that night through the high-walled, verdure-filled cañon, he thought again of the look of wonder and gratitude in the dulled eyes of the man he had left in his cabin. Was there an infinitesimal hope, he asked himself, that he could be pulled up out of the slough? What powerful forces, negative and positive, there were against any such attempt! There was the deadly drag of habit, the flaccid will, and the fiery thirst, which burned out the manhood of soul and flesh!

"What was he doing for the man?" he asked himself again. "Saving the breath that was in his nostrils for fresh debauches?"

Philip came suddenly to a standstill. He had been moving over a brilliant, many-hued carpet of wild flowers. Just before him stood a great bush so smothered in red roses that it seemed a cloud drifted down from some fiery sunset. Philip thought it the loveliest thing in its way he had ever seen; he plucked a thick-laden branch.

"Ah, my old Rockies," he broke out, "your wild cañons can beat all their gorgeous Eastern conservatories!"

Then he bounded gayly up the wall and out on the trail.

XIX

THE PROBLEM OF CALEB CRAFTS

PHILIP found Crafts awake, with a rested, more natural expression in his eyes. They brightened, too, when he recognized Philip. The latter, after a question or two, set about preparing some nourishment for his lodger; he thought, with a rueful smile, that strong coffee, in deep and frequent potations, would probably be one of the factors he should rely on, in any possible effort he might make for the rehabilitation of Crafts. But, of course, he told himself, he was not seriously considering any question of that sort. The absurdity of it would beat Don Quixote's maddest adventure. He was conscious, too, of a strong recoil at the prospect of much which such an undertaking would involve for himself; he foresaw all the disagreeable aspects,—the offence to his tastes, the long exercise of patience, the tax on his time and freedom of movement.

Philip had an idea, too, that delirium tremens, in some of its protean forms, would be the first result of any effort on Crafts's part to abstain from his drams.

The man not only drank his coffee, but, under Philip's persuasiveness, partook of some more solid nourishment. His appearance was altogether more human; he had fished up a comb from the depths of his jeans' pocket and attempted some improvement of his hair and beard.

It was Philip's cue to take on a light, half-jesting tone with his guest, which certainly did not express his own conflicting feelings regarding him.

"If," he told himself once, "he was arrant fool enough to make a dead set at Crafts, there must be some very serious talk beforehand. Meanwhile," setting his shoulders back and his jaw hard, "he wished that idea would down."

But it returned, insistent, compelling, after he came back from his own supper and took a chair by the bed on which Crafts was sitting, propped up. The man was silent, rubbing his hands with his slow, restless motion. A large, handsome lamp burned on the table. It filled the room with a soft glow. The lamp had belonged to his uncle, and was so associated with him that Philip had it forwarded from Denver with some of his own books.

"Well, Crafts," Philip broke the silence, "speak up, man, if there is anything you want!"

The hands moved a little faster.

"I was a-thinkin'."

"Suppose you let a fellow share your thoughts?"

"That it seems cur'us to a man who's been down where I have so long, to wake up and find he has a friend in the world."

"Poor old fellow!"

This was Fallowes's mental comment. His audible one, in a tone of infectious light-heartedness, was:

"Then you really mean to say that I have the honor of being the only friend you have in the world?"

There was a faint twinkle of amusement in the light eyes.

"It ain't the sort of honor anybody'll be hankerin' to share with you."

Here was Philip's chance.

"It strikes me that will be likely to depend on yourself in the long run."

A wistful look flickered in the other's eyes. Then he shook his head without speaking; but the gesture was a pathetic protest.

"You say I am your only friend in the world, Crafts?"

This time the voice was very serious.

"There ain't the shadow of a doubt on that score."

"And by your talk, it seems a great surprise to you."

"Surprise! It's been the tallest one I ever had in my life."

"If a man proves himself your friend, he would have a kind of right to expect some favor in return."

"Cert'in; but that sort of argyment won't hold in this case."

"Why not?"

"You know, Fallows. As for my doin' you any favor—" a chuckle and a groan seemed to contend in the man's throat.

"That is your view of the case. A man that was your friend might take a different one."

Crafts fastened his light-blue eyes in blank amazement on Philip. In a moment he burst out:

"Do you mean to say there's anything that I—what you see lyin' here—can do for a feller like you?"

"I mean to say that, most decidedly!"

"What is it?"

"Make a *man* of yourself once more, Caleb Crafts!"

At that virile, ringing appeal the man's face kindled

for a moment. Then the weakness and the hopelessness crept over it like a shadow. He shook his head.

"It is too late," he said drearily.

"We don't agree again. You say you were not worth saving. I thought you were, and that is the reason you are lying here to-night. I want you should try and prove you think I, too, am worth doing something for; I ask you to do this for *my* sake."

A sudden light, hope, longing, shot into Crafts's eyes. Philip knew this time that the shaft had gone home.

That was why he cut the talk short at this point.

That night Philip lay awake a long time under the trees. Between openings in the green roof he had glimpses of far, serene skies and of large, bright stars. The strong, sweet odor of the pines, the brooding stillness of the mountain night, were all around him. He thought of the man lying in the cabin, of the soul captive and chained in the dark prison-house of its own building. "Crafts," he told himself, "was not all lost. He had proved himself capable of deep and genuine gratitude; but would that emotion be powerful enough to hold against all the forces which would soon be surging like great ocean tides against it?" And again he thought of the flaccid will, the fierce appetite, probably inherited, and of the deadly hold of habit.

How those stars kept up their watches, bright and steadfast, between the great pine rafters!

Philip was suddenly seeing instead of the stars a young girl's eyes "by the farther sea."

The scales in which a human fate was hanging turned at last.

Crafts should not go back to the old death without his making a mighty effort to save him. He would bring

to the struggle all that youth has,—its boundless courage, its indomitable hope, and its victorious will.

Philip Fallowes drew his blanket about him, and the next moment was asleep.

Far above him the Rocky Mountains lifted their snowy peaks into the peaceful skies.

XX

HOW IT BEGAN

ON entering his cabin the next morning, Philip found Crafts fast asleep. He was relieved by this discovery. It was hardly yet daylight, and he moved softly, making rapid preparations for his own departure, not forgetting Crafts's comfort when he should awake.

Philip felt certain that the return to consciousness would be followed by acute misery of mind and body. Crafts's demoralized organism would fiercely demand the old stimulus. Everything else would be swallowed up in a fiery craving for his morning dram, or several of them. It was conceivable that, shaken and depressed as he was, he might gather himself together and set off to appease his consuming thirst. But that risk must be run. Philip had given his word to the mining party and could not fail them.

He had an exciting day; he shared the hopes and enthusiasms of the hour and place; he listened to the talk about new leads and pockets; he inspected eagerly mineral specimens, reports of assays and grades of ore, while the conflict of opinions waxed threateningly high at times over the location of shafts and the tunnelling of soils. In that voluble crowd, with its passionate hopes, its deep-laid schemes, and its obstinate convictions, Philip forgot everything else.

The day ended with a jolly picnic in a green, lawn-like opening near the exploited region.

It was late when Philip returned; he found Crafts awake, silent, and restless. His inquiries drew only brief replies, with an air of feeble sullenness. The man drained bowls of the strong coffee which Philip brought him, but could not be induced to touch a morsel of food. Neither was inclined for talk that night.

The next morning Philip awoke to see once more the sun kindling red in the treetops. Then he remembered what was before him.

"This day the life-and-death battle is to begin," he said, as he leaped to his feet. "Come on! I am ready for the fray."

All the generous ardor of youth throbbed within him as he flung out his challenge to the fiends.

Crafts was awake this time when Philip entered the cabin; but, as he expected, in a greatly prostrated condition. He had slept little. Every nerve in his frame was tortured and quivering for the old stimulus. The eyes gleamed wild and hungry from the pallid face. Again Philip thought of delirium tremens, but he had made up his mind to face even that spectre.

He wasted little time in words after greeting Crafts in his blithe, hearty fashion and asking about his night. He received only a feeble, half-articulate response. Coffee, a little stronger, a little more steamingly fragrant than ever, was soon in evidence. Crafts seized the bowl each time with greedy eyes and trembling hands, but he turned away from the sight of food with a shiver of disgust.

A few moments later he drew himself a little higher in the bed, turned his miserable, haggard face on Philip,

and said, in the dreariest of tones: "It won't do any good, Fallowes! You may as well give up tryin' at the outset."

"Give up trying what, Crafts?"

Philip had drawn a chair by the bed. The morning sun looked through the cabin window, and shone on the two men,—the one in the flower of his youth, strong, confident, compelling; the other hopeless, broken, aged—soul and body—before his time.

"Of course I see what you're after. It's mighty good of you, but it's too late for anything of that sort."

In this way the talk opened. It lasted all that morning. Philip, of course, had the larger share in it. Crafts interposed at times with arguments, representations, qualifications, which would have been likely to chill a less enthusiastic and inflexible auditor. But at last the glowing affirmatives, the stirring appeals, the contagious courage, began to have their effect. Certainly no man had ever talked to Caleb Crafts in that way, with such power, such persuasiveness, such vital sympathy; and then, behind all the words, was the wonder and spell of the personality.

Philip, keenly watchful, caught an occasional gleam in Crafts's eyes which convinced him that some chord of old memories and manhood had begun to vibrate under his touch.

It was this perception which made him ask, finally:

"You would be glad to get out of all this misery and be a man once more, Crafts?"

"Glad!" echoed Crafts, rocking himself to and fro, and with more animation than he had yet shown. "Don't you s'pose that a man would be glad to climb out of hell into heaven? Do you think I enjoy bein'

the drunken, God-forsaken sot I've sunk into, livin' for nothin' but his drams, and not courage even to put an end to his miserable life?"

"Well, we're going to try for something else—you and I, Crafts," replied Philip, in his deep, resonant voice, springing up and towering over the man, and looking very handsome in his miner's flannel, and feeling strong enough just then to face an army of fiends.

But though this emotion in a young man was natural enough, the talk which ensued was very much to the point. It was Philip's first stipulation that Crafts should stay for an indefinite time at the cabin, keeping absolutely aloof from old associations and temptations. He also suggested that his guest should take a bath that day, and then put every vestige of his present garments in the fire. He went on to state that he owned a new flannel outfit, which had come to him recently through some mistake, and must have been designed for a thinner man.

"It will fit you precisely, Crafts," he concluded. "I am curious to see what kind of man will emerge from the process, when you are indued with some new clothes and have given proper attention to your hair and beard."

Crafts laughed a pleased, embarrassed laugh; but Philip saw that a chord of human vanity had been struck at last.

XXI

THE BATTLE WITH THE FIENDS

Two weeks had passed since Philip Fallowes brought Caleb Crafts to his cabin. They had not been easy ones for host or guest. Sometimes, with all his will, courage, and enthusiasm,—the dominant will, the invincible courage, the eager enthusiasm of youth,—Philip almost quailed before the struggle with iron habit, relaxed energies, and maddened appetites.

He knew perfectly, too, that he himself was the only thing which stood between Crafts and hopeless relapse. The man's conscience had been aroused; his better instincts and longings had responded to his young friend's efforts and appeals; his long-lost self-respect had quickened once more—but all these, without the other, would have gone down in that battle which the weak, sodden, enslaved soul of a man was making for his life.

Such a reflection is always powerful with a generous nature. Philip never looked into the man's eyes without seeing the dog-like devotion in them. And in this lay the secret of Philip's hold; he had awakened in this man's lonely, desolate, hope-forsaken soul that adoring affection which is the kindling of a new life, and which is, in itself, the most potent influence which one human being can exercise over another.

There was one problem which Crafts was always revolving in his mind, and which he never succeeded in solving. This was that "such a young feller as Fallowes, so highly educated, lookin' as though he could carry the world on his shoulders, had done — was doing — all this for him, — Caleb Crafts!"

The consciousness, underlying everything else, had a profound effect at this time. It gave the man a new sense of personal value and dignity to find he had awakened such an interest in so superior a being.

All this, however, did not prevent Philip's going through scenes with Crafts which shook his own nerves. The man had, for a time, been carried out of himself by that constraining presence and influence. He had even been brought to agree to placing himself unreservedly in Philip's hands. His craving for liquor had, under the strong excitement of the time, been held at bay; but, in a day or two, it had returned with all its old raging strength. There were times when Crafts would passionately beseech Philip to kill him and put him out of his misery. At others, he would plead for a glass of whiskey, as a man might plead for his life. Philip, between an access of pity and a doubt whether this sudden breaking up of old habits would not prove too severe a strain on mind and body, was inclined to yield. But if he did, he would reflect in time, all the old agony must be gone over again. In these days Crafts was often on the verge of some form of delirium tremens.

The worst times of all were when Philip's own heart failed him. He would ask himself whether he had not made a huge mistake in attempting Crafts's rehabilitation. Had he not done his part when he wheeled him out of Aspen Hollow to his cabin? Would it not have

been wiser afterward to leave the poor wretch to his drams and his fate?

But, after these questions, the nobler nature would be sure to reassert itself.

As a rule, Crafts was docile in Philip's hands. In his saner moments he would beg Philip not to regard his wild talk in his frenzies. As the days went on, Philip's interest and pity for the unhappy life, stranded at his door, augmented. There was something in the man himself to justify this. His demoralization seemed to have been confined to his inebriety. Despite his later life and companionships, no foul jests, no unclean word, ever crossed his lips.

This was partly explained by his antecedents,—the early-orphaned boyhood, the weak, doting grandparents on the farm among the hills of southern Maine. At their death he found himself, in early manhood, possessed of a considerable fortune for the time and place. The right kind of woman, entering his life at this critical period, might have had an immense uplifting influence. Instead, there appeared a young girl,—Philip divined at once that she was a pretty, shallow, heartless minx,—who flirted with him desperately, and then deserted him for a more ambitious marriage.

Hope and courage gave way under this blow. The man began to drown his despair in whiskey, sold the farming properties at a sacrifice, drifted out West, made occasional tentative efforts to free himself from the habit which was fast enslaving him, had fresh experience of faithless friends,—Philip gathered the whole pitiful autobiography from these fragmentary confidences.

The pleasure which Crafts showed in his new clothes was so transparent as to be half amusing, half pathetic.

Philip added various essentials, and was amazed himself at the kind of man who emerged from the old integuments. Certainly, new clothes would have no slight share in Crafts's reformation, if that blissful result was ever attained.

This metamorphosis, however, made matters, in one respect, more difficult for Philip. It irked him to exercise such authority, to be so imperative, with a man almost twice as old as himself, especially as Crafts manifested signs of returning self-respect and manhood. But Crafts knew that his subjection was a voluntary one; he was in reality as free as the man who at times exercised such mastery over him; he could at any moment have walked out of the cabin and left it forever.

Whenever Philip went away, he pleaded with him not to be absent long. During these weeks the younger man gave up his long trips into the mountains, and returned several times each day to the cabin. He had exacted a promise from Crafts that he would not leave it in his absence. But Philip was always conscious of a sense of relief when he crossed his threshold and saw the familiar figure, big drops on the face often showing through what agony he had kept his word.

"It wouldn't do any good to lock the door," he insisted, shaking his head mournfully. "When the madness comes over me, I could smash the windows; I could fight with wild beasts; I could wrastle for a drink with a thousand devils, if they stood in my way."

All this Philip had to face, and to keep up a cheery, buoyant mien and confident speech. He always felt it a hopeful sign when he held Crafts's attention with some story, or won a sudden laugh with some jest.

At the end of a fortnight a new difficulty presented

itself,—one which Philip had all along foreseen, but had not been able to decide how he could deal with it.

“Circumstances,” he reflected, “must determine that, and meanwhile he had all on his hands that he could manage.”

Miner’s Rest, despite the fierce pace of its daily life, had found time to be curious over the disappearance of the familiar figure on the street and in the saloons. Crafts’s retreat had been accidentally discovered, and some of his old cronies had felt curiosity enough to visit the cabin in Philip’s absence.

They were hardly able to recognize Crafts in his changed dress; the man himself had maintained a surprising amount of dignity and reserve during the interview. They retired to relate the story, with their own comments and exaggerations. Miner’s Rest was soon agog. The saloons had endless mirth over young Fallowes’s attempt to reform Caleb Crafts. It struck the crowd as the hugest of jokes, and they pledged his success with loud guffaws and fiery draughts of whiskey.

XXII

"AT MULLINS'"

THE saloon was a long, two-storied, unpainted building, with a scent of fresh pine still asserting itself amid less agreeable and wholesome odors. The lower story was occupied by a bar, with gambling-tables under a chandelier of enormous size and gorgeous gilding. The story above did service as a dance hall.

One morning, about three weeks after young Fallowes had discovered Caleb Crafts on the trail, a crowd had gradually collected in the saloon. It was a good-natured crowd. One always thinks of that first when it comes to a Western mining assemblage. Bowie-knives and revolvers flashed back the sunlight harmlessly in the belts of their respective owners. The company was composed of men of differing ages and varied appearance. Some wore picturesque, wide-brimmed sombreros; some ragged straw hats, and trousers tucked in their boots. The whole represented about the average quality of the habitués of "Mullins'," as the saloon was called, from the name of its proprietor.

Near the centre of this room stood Caleb Crafts. He was the object of general interest and curiosity. Some of the men removed their pipes, so that the clouds of smoke should not interfere with their stare. The man

himself was so transformed externally that his old boon companions could hardly believe their eyes.

For the last week, Crafts had been seen more or less in the settlement. It was impossible that he should remain longer in hiding. He and Philip both agreed on this point, after his retreat had been discovered. Of course his reappearance furnished Miner's Rest with the latest sensation. But his former comrades perceived that the change in his appearance was not to be solely accounted for by new clothes. There was a change in the man himself,—in his bearing, in his every tone and glance,—which struck every one who came in contact with him.

During the last days the torture of restlessness had goaded Crafts into some attempt at work. Philip encouraged this idea. He believed that interest and activity of some sort would be wholesome for him as he regained his strength; he could not be blind to the dangers this course involved, but those, he always mentally told himself, would have to be faced.

Crafts's objective point took him that morning past Mullins'. It was the first time he had approached his old haunt. Some of his familiars, lounging about the door, recognized him, after a prolonged stare. He had resolved to do a little prospecting by himself, in some of the nearer gullies; he paused a moment, however, to answer some of the questions with which his old cronies assailed him.

A group of patrons inside were awaiting their morning dram. They suddenly learned of Crafts's proximity. One of the number proposed to lay a wager that he could be induced to break his abstinence on the instant. It was just the kind of suggestion to strike the fancy of the

crowd. The stakes ran high. In a few moments one of the ring hurried to the door and shouted to Crafts that he wanted to have a few minutes' business confab with him.

The men, idling outside, stared at this novel proposal. Crafts himself was flattered by it, a little bewildered, too, by the general attention, or he would not have crossed the threshold of Mullins' without a suspicion that some mischief was in the air.

The crowd near the bar opened and closed about him. Jokes and guffaws saluted him. They chaffed and gibed him in their rude fashion. One man complimented him on his improved appearance. Another inquired how he enjoyed playing the total-abstinence dodge, and stuff of that sort.

The man who had proposed the wager and decoyed Crafts inside, and who had a coarse mouth and a cunning leer of his eyes, engaged him in talk about a vein of rich ore which had just been discovered near Cottonwood Creek. Somebody behind the two made a sign to Mullins, and added, in a muffled tone: "The stiffest kind of whiskey this time, Bill!"

The company about the door had, by this time, been informed of what was going on. They poured in to see the fun. Elbows nudged each other. Men winked, chuckled, and lifted their eyebrows significantly. All eyes were turned in the direction of Crafts, about whom two or three had joined in keeping up the farce of the "new vein and the big show."

The bartender suddenly whipped a large glass of his strongest whiskey over the counter, under Crafts's nose.

"Come, old man!" he shouted. "Here's the sort of stuff to moisten your palate after its long drought. Down with it."

There was a breathless silence. Every gaze in the bar-room was turned on Crafts.

He looked about him; he saw in an instant the fool he had been, the trap into which he had fallen.

But at the sight, the scent of the whiskey in his nostrils, a wild-animal greed leaped to his eyes, a thirst that was like licking fire burned in his veins; he snatched the glass; he raised it to his lips. The crowd watched, motionless, spell-bound.

It rose suddenly before him — the strong young face of Philip Fallowes, the rebuking, pitying eyes which had been following him all these weeks. There was an instant’s pause, and then, in the dead stillness, a sound of crashing glass, and Mullins’ best whiskey was streaming over the floor!

Then Caleb Crafts turned upon his tormentors, the tall, thin figure straightening itself, the eyes filled with a swift, triumphant light.

“He was the only friend I had, boys!” His voice faltered, and his lips twitched a moment. “He found me up there, jest at nightfall, in Aspen Holler, a bundle o’ rags, in such a dead drunk it was likely I’d been froze stiff afore mornin’. You wouldn’t one of you have lifted a little finger to save me; he and I had never passed a word, but he went straight hum, got his wheelbarrer out, — that young tenderfoot you used to sneer about, — trundled it up the trail, heaved me aboard, and took me down to his cabin. He’s kept me there the last three weeks, and he’s been a-watchin’ and a-carin’ for me, and doin’ his utmost to wake up a man in that heap o’ rags and whiskey he come across a-lyin’ on the trail.

“You’d laid your trap smart, boys, and that whiskey would have been down my throat, instead of on the floor,

and you'd have had your laugh by this time, if that young Fallowes's face hadn't ris' up before me in the nick o' time, and saved me."

And again he drew his tall, loose-jointed figure to its full height, and seemed to tower above the crowd, as he looked about him, his gaze bright and fearless. Then he passed out of the saloon.

Miners are men. The little drama had touched the better instincts of the crowd. A wild cheer broke out as Crafts reached the sidewalk. It was followed by another. Even Mullins, rotund, red-faced, and fiery-bearded, joined in with full-volumed lungs, and then set briskly about furnishing his customers with fresh drams in honor of this unprecedented occasion.

In a little while the tongues loosened. The comments of the crowd were characteristic.

"I wouldn't 'a' believed, if I hadn't heard it with my own ears, the old cove had so much sand in him!"

"That's what I call nat'ral-born eloquence. Ain't many persons could match it."

But the moral effect of the scene on the better elements of the crowd — the portion who had joined in out of idle curiosity, and for the sake of a little excitement — now asserted itself.

"I tell you," spoke up a small, dark, keen-faced man, with a little fringe of black mustache, "his talk about what that young Fallowes had done for him made the rest of us seem small pertatoes. Think of his bundlin' the old feller up in his wheelbarrer and carryin' him off to his cabin and keepin' him there all this time! It ain't every day you find a man up to that sort of thing!"

The man who stood next to this last speaker, had the build of a giant, a good-natured face, half hidden in a

thicket of yellow beard. He was a young miner, well known, and a favorite among the crowd, who were aware that he was brave as a lion. On his way back to the “diggin’s,” he had stopped in for a moment to say good-by and have a last drink with some of his cronies.

He spoke up in his strong, deep-lunged bass.

“I jest want to express my opinion before I leave, and that is, it was devilish mean to try and play such a trick on the old fellow. All this cussedness only serves to show that young Fallowes up in his true light. I hope your fun will reflect a little more credit on you next time, boys. My name’s Dick Grainger, and you all know where I’m to be found.”

The giant touched the revolver at his belt with a bit of good-humored braggadocio, and strode out of the saloon.

XXIII

THE PARTING AT CATAMOUNT CURVE

PHILIP FALLOWS entered his cabin with his usual long, swift stride. His first glance was a searching one in the direction of his guest. Then the first question came, with the usual buoyant tone and manner.

"All right, to-day, Crafts?"

"Oh, yes, all's right, Fallows."

The younger man had noticed a little pause before the elder spoke. Crafts was sitting in his old place by the window. Philip came over and dropped down on a chair in front of him.

"Has anything happened to-day?"

"Yes; there has."

Philip thought he detected some new, forceful note in the nasal drawl. The nervous movement of the limbs had ceased.

"But you are going to tell me, man?"

In less than half an hour Philip knew every detail of the scene which had taken place in Mullins' saloon that morning.

His amazement and delight knew no bounds. He sprang to his feet; he tossed his sombrero like a boy, in the air. Then he laid his hands on Crafts's shoulders.

"Dear old fellow!" he cried. "What a dastardly piece of business it was! But how splendidly you came

out of it! I'm prouder than if my pick had been to-day in the richest vein in all the Rockies!"

"It wa'n't *I*. It was *you*, as I told 'em."

The red flush which had crept into his cheeks — for Crafts had lived over the whole scene in his recital — was slowly dying down.

"What nonsense! It is all very fine of you to give me the credit, but I'm not such a cad as to wear your laurels. I tell you it was glorious! I shall have faith in you from this hour; you will have it in yourself!"

Crafts shook his head slowly, doubtfully.

"*I* can't; *you* can't," he said. "I couldn't trust myself to go through it ag'in."

"What do you mean?" asked Philip, equally perplexed by the words and manner.

"Jest what I said. I couldn't go through that thing a second time and count on comin' out as I did the fust. The scent of that whiskey in my nostrils —" he paused and shuddered. "I know 'em! They may lay low for a time, but they'll be settin' their devil's snares for me ag'in — not the same fellers, p'rhaps. They looked as if they'd had enough of it. But this story, you see, is goin' round among the saloons and camps, and others will be wantin' to try their hand at the game, some for the fun of it, and others out of cussedness. I've been looking the thing square in the face, turnin' it all round, sittin' here for hours."

"You don't do yourself justice, Crafts!" Philip broke out, with the impetuosity of youth. "A man is not the same after such a deed of moral heroism. You stand on a new plane now. You have gained a new vantage-ground for the next struggle."

"Mebbe!" Crafts shook his head dubiously. "But

I can't be so sure of it as you. They'll be cert'in to set new traps for me, as I said, and come on me when I'm least lookin' for it. There's a kind of power, too, in places and people you've known for a long time to keep you in the old ways. All that would be diff'runt in a new place. Fallowes," — his tone changing to a key of fixed purpose, and looking steadily at his friend, — "it's come down to a fine p'int with me. I've got to clear out of Miner's Rest."

Philip's amazement at this last avowal took away his power of speech for a moment. When he spoke, he attempted no argument; he merely asked quietly: "But where would you go, Crafts?"

"It don't make much diff'runce to me. I should strike off for some minin' camp and turn to prospectin' on my own hook, or get somebody to grubstake me."

Philip rose, paced rapidly a few times across the floor. Then he turned to the elder man and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Crafts," he said, with a real affectionateness in his tone, "we won't talk this thing over any more now. I want to sleep on it. You look tired, and I'm ravenously hungry."

Philip did his best with the supper that night. The broiled steak and game, the delicious coffee, to which the two men sat down in the cabin, might have tempted the appetite of a gourmand.

Philip Fallowes lay awake a long time that night on his odorous couch of pine needles, with the stars looking down on him from the far mystery of height and distance, through the lattices of pine boughs. He went over the shameful scene that morning at Mullins'; he went over the later talk in his cabin. Slowly and with reluctance

he had to admit to himself the force of Crafts's reasoning; he could not urge him to stay against his own instincts. But when he pictured him, shaken and unnerved, in a distant mountain camp, amid strange scenes and people, the prospect gave him a real pang. Philip had by this time grown to take a deep personal interest in the man.

But he saw now, clearly as Crafts himself, the nearer dangers of Miner's Rest. The struggle would be maintained here at a disadvantage. The worst and most reckless elements of the community would no doubt combine to accomplish his downfall. It would be a matter of pride with them.

Then Philip recalled the new tone of energy and resolve with which Crafts had spoken. That moment of struggle and triumph in the saloon seemed to have made a new man of him. No doubt his instinct had pointed true. Away from his old boon companions, amid new surroundings, his chances would be better for a fresh start. Philip began to see that he had done, at least for the present, all he could for Caleb Crafts.

The next morning the whole matter was gone over thoroughly between the two. After hours of talk, it was decided that Crafts should try his fortunes in a new mining settlement about a hundred miles north of Miner's Rest.

Grizzly Gulch camp had been chosen, at Fallowes's suggestion. He had done some prospecting in company with a man who, he had since learned, was foreman in one of the newly opened mines in the cañon that had been christened with so grim a name. In the days the two had spent on the mountains, Philip had decided that his companion, though not a polished, was a thoroughly

kind-hearted fellow. He wrote a letter which he felt sure would be of service to Crafts on his arrival at Grizzly Gulch.

When it was settled, the elder man was impatient to be gone. At this time, however, he often said to Philip, with a husky voice and a trembling of the lips:

"You're all the friend I've got in the world, Fallowes. It jest breaks me up to think of leavin' you."

The trip to Grizzly Gulch involved a long stage ride. The point of intersection with the coach was at Cata-mountain Curve, ten miles from Miner's Rest. Philip announced his intention to accompany his friend to the junction. The two men set off on broncos.

The trail led them at first among small, beautiful cañons, with singing creeks, and the September glory of wild flowering, out of which they climbed into the world of cedars and sharp-pointed firs, until these failed among piled rocks and bare ridges.

At these times the men's attention was engrossed by their animals; but when they struck the descent, the trail had a comparatively easy grade, and they could ride abreast.

It had been Philip's habit to avoid long arguments and sage advice, so far as was possible, with Crafts. He had seen all along that his real power had lain from the beginning, not in what he said to, but what he had done for, him.

But now, with the thought that the poor fellow would soon have passed from him into the silence and distance, his heart yearned to say some last thing which he could carry away, which he might remember in some sore strait.

"Crafts," he spoke suddenly after a little silence, as

they came on a long reach of rocky trail, "you know when a man gets into the hardest sort of straits, and there is no human power to help him, he can remember that God is around. I haven't said much about Him to you, because — well, when it came to the pinch, I felt a better fellow than I ought to do that."

Crafts pulled his rein sharply and turned to his friend. A sudden fire shot into his eyes.

"You thought that, did you?" he said. "Wall, for my part, I've been thinkin' all these weeks, too, and it came to jest this: 'If the God they tell about re'ly is, it stands to reason He couldn't make anybody better'n Himself. There's Fallowes, now!' It's been a kind of thought to tie to."

"Crafts!" That was all Philip said. But he drew a long, unsteady breath. Had not his own thought been essentially the same of a tall slip of a girl, who probably by this time had forgotten his existence?

They rode out on a bare, sandy highway. On their left was a high, ragged bluff, at whose base the road made a sharp curve. In a few moments a great, yellow stage came in sight. The riders signalled it. Philip helped Crafts to remove the box, which he had taken care should be well supplied with everything for his immediate needs.

They gripped each other's hands and gazed in each other's eyes.

"You are not going to disappoint me, Crafts?" Philip's voice was a husky appeal.

"If I do, you'll never look on my face ag'in. If I don't, I shall come back to you, some time, to prove it."

The passengers stared in idle curiosity out of the stage-

window. The driver whistled impatiently to his horses. In a few moments Philip Fallowes was standing alone with the broncos, and scarcely seeing the yellow coach, as it rolled away, because of something that suddenly flashed in his eyes.

XXIV

RED KNOLLS AGAIN

It was the last day of the month, and the month was May. That means in New England that the spring has answered to her time; that the great tidal wave of life has swept surging and flooding over a land shorn and desolate with the winter, harried and beaten with the storms, — a land healed and clothed now with all the abundance and beauty of the leafage, and that awaits, amid choiring birds and garlanding flowers, the coming of the June.

It was the time which Dorothy Draycott had chosen for celebrating at Red Knolls the first birthday that Daisy Ross had ever known.

"Of course," said Dorothy, "with three hundred and sixty-five birthdays to choose from, the chances are immensely against its being the real one; but in all its freshness and sweetness, in its beauty and gladness, it is the day, away down to its golden heart, which is symbolic of Daisy!"

Everybody agreed with this sentiment.

So Daisy and Dake Cramley were asked to a quiet little banquet at Red Knolls, and there were to be pretty gifts after the feast, and all the things which would make the day dear and memorable to the little girl, who

would be a lovelier thing than the fairest flower they would twine in her birthday wreath.

In the early afternoon Tom Draycott came out of the side-door, sauntered down the walk, and stretched himself on a small grassy bank where some raspberry thickets were throwing long tremulous shadows.

"Of course I am a lazy, luxurious rascal," he said to himself, "to take this blissful midday ease, while most of my fellow-beings are delving and moiling at their stint; but this air and sunshine must be the excuse to my conscience."

His legs were stretched in the sunlight; the tall raspberry bushes, with all their rambling leafage, threw frolicsome shadows across his face; the birds sang; the winds gossiped among the boughs. It was the same old world, but young now with her undying youth and beauty about him.

Tom had brought, from mere force of habit, a book with him. It lay unopened on the grass by his side. The vast, green, illuminated page before him was better worth reading just now than any printed one.

A pair of small feet stole softly through the grass, so softly that he did not hear them; a pair of eyes, which seemed to have stolen the tint and depth of the sapphire overhead, were sparkling and dancing just behind him; a sudden shadow fell across his eyes. Before he could turn, two soft little palms closed over them.

"Is a real ghost abroad in daylight?" he asked, his voice keyed to a pretence of awe and wonder.

There was no reply, but his ears caught little smothered sounds of laughter.

"Does there happen to be a white-and-gold Daisy growing around here?" he inquired gravely.

This time the smothered laughter broke out in a peal of merriment. The soft palms were suddenly lifted. Tom stretched his arm around and drew the light figure before him.

"They sent me out here to find you, Mr. Tom; they said you would be glad of some company," explained Daisy Ross, when she had nestled down on the grass beside him.

He divined at once that the household, busy with birthday preparations and surprises, had resorted to this expedient for getting her away.

"I hope you were not sorry to come, Daisy?"

"Of course I was glad, unless you were — busy."

"Oh, no! The old grind is off to-day, and I am taking my ease at mine inn."

As he spoke, he gazed at her with pleased interest, — at the golden head and the wild-rose bloom in her cheeks, and the sapphire depth in her eyes; he thought how all nature's lovely unfolding things were typical of herself. But he did not say this; his mother had frequently warned him against anything of the sort. Daisy's greatest charm was her ingenuousness. Mrs. Draycott wanted to shield it from a touch of the world's breath. Tom at heart agreed with his mother, and usually brought himself up in time, when he was going off into a strain of flattery. Daisy's artlessness, her pretty childish confidences, had great charm for the cultivated and critical young man. The two had endless frolics and romps, as well as grave talks together. As she sat by his side now, the shining head, the happy face, drooped a little toward him, the memory of that first time he saw her at Red Knolls came up vividly; he remembered with what infantile trust, what childlike assurance, she had walked straight into his heart.

Her question broke suddenly into the memory. "What are you thinking about now, Mr. Tom?"

"Well, for one thing, that you are our little May Daisy."

She lifted her eyebrows archly. "And so are all the other daisies that are making the fields white like snow-drifts to-day, and that will be June daisies to-morrow."

"Yes; but this one is not like the field daisies. It is golden-haired and blue-eyed and dimpled —" he remembered his mother's warning and stopped short.

"And those other daisies don't have birthdays — at least they don't know it, if they have. O Mr. Tom, it is such a beautiful thing to have a birthday! This is my first one, you know. I suppose it seems all the more strange and beautiful for that."

Tom wondered with himself. "Must not such a bright little brain have been conscious of some mystery in its past — been perplexed to account for some things?" He knew that Dake Cramley and Mrs. Bray had persuaded themselves that Daisy had forgotten all the events of her infancy; but the people at Red Knolls had never fully shared that conviction.

"Well, for my part, Daisy, I am hugely glad that the first birthday is to be kept with mirth and feast at Red Knolls, and that you are to be Queen of this last May-day."

She drew a long breath, as though the happiness and wonder of it almost oppressed her. Then she went on to tell him how Mr. and Mrs. Amoury and aunty Dayles had written letters, which were to be read after the birthday supper, and which would tell her how sorry they were not to share in the festival and all the lovely things which were to happen. But she did not tell him

about the presents. These had been religiously kept to crown the end of the feast with a delightful surprise.

Tom listened again with pleased interest to all this prattle. Daisy's next remark startled him.

"I can't tell just why, but this makes me think of the first time I came to Red Knolls."

"Do you remember that, Daisy?"

"Oh, yes! I know it happened such a long while ago, and I was very little, but I remember it better than I do a great many later things."

Tom bent down and plucked a pretty pink carnation, which had lost its way from its sisterhood in the flower-beds and sent up a little solitary glow in the grass at his feet.

"What do you remember, for instance, Daisy?"

"I remember just the way you looked, Mr. Tom, when you came into the room. I was playing with Hidalgo,—he was the biggest dog I had ever seen,—and I got up and sat still, and we both stared at each other a long time, without speaking a word. Then, all of a sudden, it came to me who you were, and I spoke up and told you. Oh, I see it all so plain, now!"

"I remember that little scene vividly, too, and can add something to your picture. I see this moment a small figure hurrying across the room, and a sweet little face, with the bluest eyes in the world, is being lifted to mine for a kiss."

"Oh, yes, I remember!" she laughed gleefully a moment. Then she poised her head gravely. Some unconscious withdrawal—the shyness and reserve of nascent womanhood—seemed to come over her. "But I was very young at that time, Mr. Tom!" she said.

The words, the manner, were so bewitching, that Tom

was conscious of a strong temptation to bend down and kiss the sweet mouth; but he contented himself with replying: "Of course you were very young, Daisy, but — why do you say that?"

"I don't know," locking and unlocking her little white fingers, "unless — well — it seems as though I ought to have waited for *you*!"

Of course he laughed at this speech, but, all the same, it had touched something deep and reverent in his nature — something that he had an almost morbid horror of wearing on his sleeve.

In a few moments Daisy was saying: "But I think it is very strange you should remember that."

"Why do you think it strange, when I can remember things — worlds of them — which happened long before?"

"But it was such a little thing for you — a great, big man — to remember, Mr. Tom; that was what I meant. It couldn't have been in the least important to you."

"You think so? Well, my dear, little girls cannot always judge what things are important to 'great, big men.'"

"Oh, such a splendid butterfly as that was — crimson and gold! It was on that white gilia a moment. How I wish you could have seen it!"

"We won't waste any time regretting it, with a whole summer full of butterflies before us."

Daisy laughed a little at that speech, and then she fell silent; and Tom, glancing at her occasionally, knew by the smile which hovered about her lips that her fancies were busy with the birthday festival so close at hand. Then he fell to pondering again whether Daisy's memory, which had kept so tenaciously the events of their first meeting, could be utterly oblivious of all the circum-

stances which had preceded it. If it were not, this long, absolute silence proved a reserve power almost inconceivable in so young a child. He grew curious as he watched her, but he would not hazard an indirect question, lest it might stir to life some old, painful scene that had gone to sleep in the dawn of her memory.

Daisy started suddenly, looked up, and met his full gaze with this thought behind it. Instantly there was a flash of consciousness in her face. It flushed and grew tremulous. Then she nestled close to his side and said, in a voice so low that it was almost a whisper: "Mr. Tom, I know what you were thinking about!"

"You do?"

She bowed her head with grave decision.

"But how do you know, Daisy?"

"Sometimes I can tell what people are thinking about me. I don't know how, — just, — but it seems as though I *felt* it."

"Will you tell me what you *felt* I was thinking about, Daisy?"

The child drew a long breath that was like a sigh. Then she snuggled a little closer to him with a kind of appealing movement; her voice was so low that he bent his head not to lose a syllable.

"I knew you were wondering whether I remembered things that happened before that time I saw you first!"

"Daisy!" his head went up in amazement.

"Yes; that is what you were thinking!" Then, in a moment, looking him in the face again, and with a little tremble in her voice, she said: "Mr. Tom, I *do* remember!"

"What do you remember?" throwing the last vestige of caution to the winds.

Again that fluttering sigh, the little fingers working rapidly in and out. "They think I've forgotten,—Dake and Mrs. Bray,—and they are so careful never to say a word to bring it up, because they fear it would trouble me, and — and — I didn't mean to tell you, Mr. Tom."

She said this anxiously, her lips quivering, much as though she had been confessing some fault. It went to Tom's heart.

"Never mind, Daisy dear. You have done no harm, and I shall never tell them."

The tone, the words, quieted and comforted her. Tom gazed at her, struck with amazement at the self-control which she — a mere infant at the beginning — had maintained through all these years. She had hidden from those who were constantly with her, and who watched her with unfailing tenderness, the memories which lay vivid on the farthest borderland of her childhood; he saw, too, what the silence must have cost her, what a relief it must be to share her secret and unburden her heart to another. So he said, with a tone full of kindness and persuasiveness — and both with Tom Draycott could be very constraining: "But you have not yet answered my question, Daisy?"

Another of these fluttering breaths, a little closer nestling to his side, and she began.

"The thing I remember best is when Dakie came. There is a long time before that is very dark, and it seems that I was in some strange, dreadful place, and very unhappy, and scared all the while; and faces will come up sometimes and things that happened, but they are all so far away I can't tell which is dream and which is true. Perhaps I should think it was all a dream, if I didn't remember that other time."

"And it is the wisest thing to think they are all dreams, whenever they do come up," commented Tom decidedly.

"But that other is *not* a dream," rejoined the sweet voice, with a note of assuredness all through it. "It all stands out as clear and certain as — as this very minute. I see it all," — she continued excitedly now, — "that dreadful man with the whip in his hand, and I am running out into the alley, trying to get away from him, and there is a great crowd of people stopping and staring, and then suddenly I look up, and see Dakie standing there with a great pity in his eyes, and I run toward them, and he bends right down and lifts me up in his arms, and just then the man comes forward, threatening and swearing at us both, and I cling to Dakie, and he isn't one bit afraid; he clenches his fist at the man and tells him to dare to come a step farther, and that scares him, and the people look kind and pitiful on me, and they praise Dakie and threaten to horsewhip the man. And afterward there is a good deal of talk, and Dakie tries to comfort me, and when he finds I don't belong to anybody, he carries me right away, and the people cheer him, and he never once sets me down until we are in Mrs. Bray's sitting-room."

The child's heart was going fast; the tears were streaming over her cheeks.

Tom drew his arm about Daisy; he comforted her as a man can, in his strong, tender way, when his whole heart is touched for some innocent, helpless thing.

"Now you have told me all this, Daisy, you must put it away from you, as one does a nightmare when one wakes out of the black, ugly thing into the bright morning-sunshine and finds the birds singing and all the old, familiar sights at hand."

The smiles broke suddenly into Daisy's tear-stained face; she brushed away the curls, which had fallen over her cheeks. "It has been just like that with me ever so many times," she said. "I've waked up, and the world was so beautiful and people were so dear and kind that I forgot all about the nightmare. I sometimes wonder if, when folks have had a hard, cruel time in this world, and then die, they don't find just such a happy waking up in heaven."

"We will hope they do, Daisy."

A little later she was saying very earnestly: "I don't know what made me tell you all this, Mr. Tom,—on my birthday, too!"

"But you will never be sorry that you did tell me, I hope."

"Oh, no! I shall always be glad; I think it has done me good."

Afterward Tom led the conversation into a different vein, and Daisy responded with all the joyous elasticity of childhood. She confided to him, with immense delight, all the plans and preparations, so far as she had been taken into the secret, for her birthday. His comments, his droll remarks, his ignorance, either real or feigned, of the simplest matters connected with the occasion, threw her into transports of merriment.

At last a message came for Daisy. It was time to prepare for the festival. Tom lifted her from the seat, and, with her hand in his, they returned together to the house.

XXV

DAKE CRAMLEY'S DECISION

THAT birthday celebration will always be memorable, for several reasons which have never crossed his lips, to Dake Cramley.

He had come down from Branch Woods, where he had been much in demand of late as assistant superintendent in the new mills of Meredith, Max, and Company; he had hurried out to Red Knolls in order to be in time for the entertainment. It was late in the afternoon when he arrived, but he learned at the house that Daisy was somewhere in the grounds with Tom Draycott, and at once set off in search of them.

A sound of voices drew him after a little while, in the right direction; he approached, with stealthy steps, the reach of low, sunny bank with its bordering raspberry hedges; his grave black eyes twinkled with merriment; he was about to surprise the pair. They were much absorbed in their talk and did not hear his approach between the long lines of ancient currant-bushes; they did not perceive him even when he appeared in full view on their left; they had risen by this time and were sitting on a low rustic bench. The confidential talk into which Daisy had been surprised was over now, but the feeling which it had called out on both sides, was still expressed in their attitude and manner. Daisy had

nestled close to Tom Draycott; he was looking down on her with a manly, protecting air which had a touch of tenderness that her recent disclosures would have gone far to explain. On her part, she was gazing up at him, her great eyes radiant with happiness.

Dake Cramley stopped. The smile ceased to twinkle in his eyes; he stood several minutes, unaware that he was listening to the talk which concerned itself with the birthday party and related matters. It could never have entered his mind that Daisy would have anything to say to Tom Draycott which was not for him to hear. It was simply the attitude and expression of the two, and nothing in the conversation which he overheard, that brought young Cramley to that sudden halt. When, a few moments later, he stole away, nobody had suspected his proximity.

He went off among some tall shrubbery on the edge of the grounds,—he had learned every inch of Red Knolls by heart; he walked back and forth, and, with all his keen instinct and alert senses for every phase of outdoor life, he was wholly unobservant now of that glorious world about him; his face was grave with the gravity which belongs to the great, strenuous moments and experiences of life.

For as he saw Tom Draycott's fine head bent down that he might not lose a syllable of the soft bright prattle, and as he caught the radiant happiness of Daisy's upward look, the thought had flashed across him that these two might some time be all that man and woman can be to each other.

It was such a novel idea, he was so utterly unprepared for it, that for a moment it almost took his breath away. But now, as he paced the thick shrubbery shadows in

the late May afternoon, he was slowly bringing himself to face the idea, and all that it must mean for himself.

His first sense — it could not be otherwise — was that of an immeasurable loss. Could he give her up — his own Daisy — the joy of his life — she who had come into his heart, a very angel of God, when the fiends were after him, and they had shrank, cowed and defeated, before that innocent child-presence? It had always been a question in his own mind, when he looked back to that time, whether he could have kept up the fight, even with all Tom Draycott's help, if that other influence, so unlike, and yet so compelling, had not entered his life.

Daisy was so interwoven with it now, so much a part of every day's comings and goings, so associated with all events and happenings, that it seemed impossible for him, even in thought, to set her apart from their common life. Indeed, he had taken it as much for granted that Daisy and he would always be together, as he had that the sun would shine and the winds blow in those years to which he was looking forward.

As for Daisy herself, the time when she would be a woman, still seemed æons off to her imagination. Dake was certain that an idea of their living apart had never entered her mind, and that the suggestion would overwhelm her with grieved amazement.

Cramley was a young man, and his perspective of the future had reached farther than Daisy's; he had occasionally dreamed of a time when the child should have bloomed into the lovely woman, when he might venture to speak to her of another love, which had its roots, deep and strong, in their common past. One illuminating moment had shown him how tenaciously he had cherished the idea that such an hour was awaiting them both.

"Could he abandon it? Could he give her up?" he asked himself again. "Give all she was to him now, all she promised to be, even to the friend he loved best, to whom he owed everything that he was to-day?"

The thought made him stop short for a moment, set his teeth hard, and grind his heel in the sod as though something was wrenching at soul and body.

But before he resumed his walk, he knew this was the very thing he *would* do. It would mean a pain, a sacrifice, of course, but it would not be so great a one — with his strong, practical sense he saw that — as though the knowledge had taken him unprepared.

The thing itself might, of course, never happen. With all Draycott's fondness for Daisy, Dake was certain such an idea had never crossed his mind. It probably would not for the present, and meanwhile there were many chances that some other woman might enter Tom's life; his thought glanced at the difference in their ages, but the next moment he saw that fact would, unless something else interposed, make no more difference with Draycott than it would with himself.

Dake Cramley had not a doubt that he was the dearest thing in the world to Daisy Ross. She proved this indubitably in a thousand ways; but he was conscious, too, that in certain directions, without ever putting the faintest thought in her child-brain, he could exert some influence for his friend.

"Yes," drawing himself up, and a sudden light breaking into the seriousness of his eyes, "he would accustom himself to look upon this thing as a possibility. He would give Daisy — his own Daisy — to Tom Draycott! *That* should be his free, glad gift for all the infinite debt he owed his friend. And Daisy — all the child was —

all the woman would be," Dake said proudly to himself, "would be ample reward — even for Tom Draycott!"

Then he fell to thinking what a splendid couple they would make. He smiled to himself over a vision that rose in his mind. He said to himself, too, that he was an ordinary, commonplace fellow in comparison with that elegant Tom Draycott. Of course Daisy, with her instincts and tastes, must see and feel the difference.

At last Dake glanced at his watch, and found, to his dismay, there was barely time to indue himself in his dress-suit, which he had provided for this occasion.

The birthday party was as simple as it was delightful an affair. The only guests were Dake Cramley and Mrs. Bray, with half a dozen of Daisy's classmates.

The little girl herself, the central figure of the occasion, looked very lovely in her white dress with rose-pink ribbons and scarf, and carried herself as though she had been familiar with birthday festivals all her life.

The presents — that supreme surprise to Daisy — were bestowed on a table in the drawing-room alcove. These were simple, and none of them costly, because they were the gifts of sensible and refined people, who, had they been the possessors of millions, would have had some higher motive in their choice than commercial values. But every present had some beauty in itself and would have some dainty use, some graceful association, which was infinitely better than an expensive trifle, selected less for the child's sake than to gratify the personal vanity of the givers.

The party was under the special auspices of Dorothy Draycott, but the young men did their share admirably, and when the banquet was over, and the gifts displayed, there were games on the lawn and swings for Daisy's

classmates, who, as they went sweeping off into the air, shrieked with terror and rapture. And while all this was going on, the last May sunset of the year ran up its colors,—crimson, edged with orange, and a great glory of gold in the west.

If Daisy Ross should live to see a century of birthdays, she will never forget that first one.

Dake Cramley will never forget it either; for it meant for him a change, a readjustment of something very precious in his thought and life. Sometimes, amid all the gayety, a sudden memory would start to life, and a shadow steal into his heart.

But had the memory been ten times sharper, the shadow ten times deeper, he would never, from that day, have regretted the decision he made when he walked among the shrubbery at Red Knolls.

XXVI

THINGS THEY SAID TO EACH OTHER

"GRACE, let us have a walk together."

It was a week after the birthday party. Mr. and Mrs. Draycott were alone, the young people having gone out for the evening.

The husband and wife went out into the June night. A breeze breathed in from the sea among the blossoms and dews, and all the air was alive with sweet odors. In the vast upper world there was a great flocking of stars with no regal moon to dull their radiance.

They had walked for five minutes, perhaps, among flower-beds and shrub-bordered ways, when Mrs. Draycott surprised her husband by asking suddenly: "Well, Donald, what is it?"

"How do you know it is anything, Grace?"

"I heard it in your voice when you invited me to walk with you. I have been feeling it ever since."

"It will be a stunning surprise to you."

"Make haste,—please!"

"Glenn was married last week!"

"Donald!" Mrs. Draycott stood still.

"Her husband is Lord Elsbourne; he has inherited large landed estates, with an ancient country-house and a city home; he was a widower with one son and heir; his constituents have sent him twice to the House of

Commons; he is a Tory of the moderate type, deep in his fifties, a man honored for his intellectual force and character. Of course you will understand I am now quoting from Glenn's letter. The wedding was very quiet. They have gone now to his box on the Scottish moors for the shooting. 'I understand, Donald dear,' Glenn writes, 'that with your thorough-going American ideas, you will not be hilarious over a titled brother-in-law. Your feelings and convictions are not of the kind to be affected by personal connections. But I am sure, if you were to know my husband, you would find in the man himself much to like and admire. At all events, he was, after long reflection, my choice and—let a woman's vanity just peep out here!—among many suitors. I have no idea that I shall ever regret my decision, but I shall most deeply regret anything which widens that breach which you and I know has, of late years, existed between us, Donald, my brother.'

"This is the first time, you know, that Glenn has ever alluded to — matters."

"I have no doubt those last words came from her heart; I have no doubt she loves you better than anybody else in the world, Donald."

"She took a strange way of showing it upon a time." There was a touch of sternness in his voice.

Donald Draycott had not seen his sister since her last visit to Red Knolls, which just escaped a tragic close. On her return home, her husband's physician had insisted upon his starting at once for southern Europe, as the only possible chance for his recovery. They had sailed a few weeks after Mr. and Mrs. Draycott's return from California. Change of climate had, at first, a beneficial effect on the invalid, but in less than a year Glennis

Draycott Grayling was a widow. She did not carry out her first intention of returning to America. English life, varied by frequent visits to the continent, became more and more agreeable to her. The American widow, still in the prime of her years and beauty, must have found her social ambitions — a very strong part of her nature — gratified by the attention and admiration which awaited her in her foreign life.

Mr. and Mrs. Draycott had been at home for weeks before they learned what Mrs. Grayling's brief visit had meant for their young people. In the joyous days which followed the family reunion, Tom and Dorothy shrank from approaching the painful subject, but it could not forever remain a secret. Mrs. Draycott's intuitions soon satisfied her that some deep trouble had been associated with her sister-in-law's advent. One day, when weeks of happiness had softened the old memories, the whole came out; Dorothy made a clean breast to her father, and Tom, taking much blame to himself, did the same to his mother.

The blow had been struck where it would be felt most keenly by those who listened in shocked amazement. Mrs. Draycott gained a new sense of the possibilities of anger in her husband's nature. He had occasionally confessed these to her, but he usually held them in such strong leash that she had hardly believed him. At that time a revealing flash of memory had set many things in new meanings before him. He saw that Glenn's conduct could only be accounted for by her disappointment at his marriage, while she had other plans and had set her heart on another choice. Her resentment, visited principally upon Dorothy, had no doubt been intensified by his devotion to his wife.

And he had never in all these years suspected! Donald Draycott was aghast at his own stupidity.

His sister's position at that time, in a foreign land, with a dying husband, had constrained her brother to silence, and her first allusion to the burning matter was, as we have seen, in the letter which announced her marriage.

"Glenn has found her place," continued Mrs. Draycott, as they pursued their walk. "What a graceful mistress she will be; how perfectly she will do the honors of the ancient country house and the smart London home and the shooting-box on the Scottish moors! She will seem to the manner born; she will enjoy all the state and ceremonial of that English high life. Shall I congratulate you, Donald," lifting her beautiful brows archly, "that you have, at last, a brother-in-law in the British peerage?"

He laughed. "I mean no disrespect to that venerable, historic body, but when it comes to congratulations for any connection with it, an American — of the true type, of course — cannot forget that his country and his forefathers disallowed, in the most solemn manner, the very things for which it exists to-day."

"I know. But about this letter?"

"Of course I shall do the proper thing there, — send the stereotyped congratulations and compliments. I hope Glenn will be happy with her English husband and her ancient title."

"O Donald, that is not the way you speak, when your heart goes with the words!"

"I was thinking of Grayling at the moment. Poor fellow! He worked so hard to amass that big fortune! No doubt it shortened his days, and he never once

dreamed that it might go to support an English nobleman's splendors. I hope his lordship has not married Glenn for her money, and that his estates will not need her tributaries to keep them flourishing."

"One cannot help thinking of Grayling, and how he would have felt," Mrs. Draycott responded, half to herself. "But then, he is on a new stage now, where commercial values are not the supremely important thing."

"You are right. If he knew, he might not care so much now."

There was a little pause, and still the sea winds breathed soft among the leaves and grass.

"Donald," said Mrs. Draycott in a low, appealing tone, "when you write that letter, I want you to feel kindly as you can toward Glenn."

In a moment he said tenderly: "I will try, dear. If it had all been done to myself, it would have been easier to forgive."

"But she could not foresee — what followed. And it was not Dorothy, after all; she only stood, at that cruel time, for her mother. Glenn had cherished her long disappointment and bitterness until they maddened her."

"And does the fact that it was you make the wrong to me a lighter one?"

"But it was Glenn who lost — what she had set her heart on. It was I who won. When I think of that, Donald, my bitterest moment has softened toward her."

He laid his hand on the arm which rested on his arm. "Well, Grace," he said, after a little pause, "I will write the letter as you have asked me."

A good while afterward, when they had returned from their walk and were sitting on the piazza, while talk and mood were in another vein, Mrs. Draycott was relating

to her husband various amusing incidents which had taken place among her callers that afternoon. Her report had the bright woman's touch, the sprightliness, the feminine insight, the sense of the humorous, which made her talk a series of delightful character sketches, at least to her auditor.

"O Donald," she was saying, between amusement and despair, when it came to one of her guests, "there is something sublime in such self-complacency as hers. It is so absolute, so invulnerable! If Shakspeare himself, if all the company of the Immortals, were to gather about her, she would never dream they were conferring any honor, never doubt her capacity to entertain them fitly. How delightful it must be to have such an unshaken conviction of one's superiority to all mortals and demigods!"

After the man had done laughing, he said: "But this sort of thing, you may be assured, my dear, is not confined to your sex. I am thrown every day with the male specimen who is so strongly intrenched in a sense of his own immaculateness, that I sometimes ask myself whether anything short of the crack of doom will be powerful enough to shake it."

There was a good deal of talk in this lighter vein, followed by one of those long pauses which are the blissful privilege of the most intimate companionship.

It was broken at last by Mrs. Draycott, who turned to her husband and said in a low voice, as one speaks when the heart goes along with the words: "O Donald, I am glad I am sitting here to-night; I am glad I am your wife!"

He knew her too well not to suspect that the talk they had in the grounds had inspired this remark.

"I think you cannot be quite so glad as I am, Grace;

but you must remember it takes a woman like you to make a marriage like ours."

"I am sure it takes a man like you, Donald Draycott! What do you suppose I could have made of it without you? Even after all our years together, I cannot think quite calmly of the chances and possibilities, the might-have-beens of our youth."

"Yes; I remember two or three most wretched days, when, in my idiocy and jealousy, I thought another man was coming between us. I was ready to go to the devil. Perhaps I should have gone, too, if that other blessed thing we both know had not happened."

"Yes, we know. But you would *not* have gone to the devil, Donald."

"Well, I am not so sure. But," he continued fervently, "however desperate my case might have been, I should never have fallen so low as my rival."

"I don't understand you, Donald."

"I never could have solaced myself with the sort of life-long companionship he did! Think of a man who had talked of love to you, Grace, choosing afterward such a silly, shallow, conceited piece of femininity, her whole being absorbed in small social rivalries, in scandals and fashions! If *he* is satisfied, it is, of course, none of my business! I should, had he acted differently, have gone through life pitying the fellow out of my own happiness. As it is, I have never forgiven him."

Mrs. Draycott laughed. "How fortunate it is that married people can say to each other what they would not to anybody else in the world! Who would believe you could be so severe on poor little Mrs. Thorndell! She, I know, would feel that *her* Romeo was to be infinitely congratulated on his change of Juliets."

Donald Draycott laughed again. "I am sure Mrs. Thorndell would never put the fact in that poetic way, although I have not the faintest doubt that she regards her husband as the most lucky man on this planet."

There was a sound of light carriage-wheels on the drive. A moment later Tom and Dorothy were on the piazza. The latter cried out gayly: "Here are papa and mamma, sitting like two young lovers in the starlight! You and I, Tom, will never follow their example."

"And therefore lose the very best thing in life," rejoined her father.

The young people sat down, and for the next half hour the air was merry with their different versions of the events of the party.

XXVII

FIVE YEARS

PHILIP FALLOWES had been almost five years at Miner's Rest. During this time he had never revisited the world on which he had turned his back when he left Colorado Springs. A variety of things had conspired to prevent his return, but the principal one was that he had nothing to justify to others his long retreat in the Rocky Mountains. As time went on, this feeling became, as was natural, more powerful with him.

He was certain that the world, in its crude, off-hand way of judging, would set him down as a crank or a failure, if he appeared in it now; his pride winced at that thought. "If I could dazzle people's eyes," he said to himself, "with a big fortune in possession or immediate prospect, it would applaud me to the echo. As I have nothing of that sort to show, it is wise to remain where I manage to pay my toll and am not quite the unhappiest fellow in the world."

The concluding sentence expressed Philip's genuine feeling. The Colorado mountain-life — its freedom, its expansiveness, its elemental force — had entered into the very fibre of his being; it had tested him in innumerable ways; it had deepened and enriched and braced him, as the old life, with all its opportunities, refinements, and indulgences, could never have done.

He had grown — of course the result must have involved a slow growth — to live year by year in closer and more joyous and fruitful fellowship with nature, among her grandest forms, her noblest architecture. All which had at first been alien and repellent to him in her unbroken silences and her vast, stony desolations had vanished now. He had drawn nearer to her heart. Something of her broadening influence, of her deeper harmonies, of her reposeful strength, had been revealed to his soul.

But there was another life, more significant than that of nature, all about him, — a life virile, tumultuous, full of human drama, contacts and relations.

Miner's Rest had never experienced one of those booms which lift a mining-camp into world-wide fame, and, after a period of mad speculation and dazzling visions of enormous wealth, suddenly collapse and leave breaking hearts and wrecked fortunes in their wake. The young town had, however, enjoyed a moderate degree of prosperity, and had much improved externally. Its principal thoroughfare now contained a new post-office, a smart business-block, and a schoolhouse, with an ambitious, if not ornamental, belfry. The shanties and log-cabins of an earlier stage were in process of disappearing, and the population had more than trebled itself.

So far as Philip was concerned, there was no danger of the recurrence of the scene at Good-Luck shaft. Hundreds of men would have been ready to speak for him now, where there was only one in the earlier time. The change in public sentiment was evident when the orator with political ambitions, whose speech had been most effective on that occasion, took pains to treat Philip with special cordiality. He was a great favorite with the

women. The feminine instinct was swift to detect a certain quality of manly deference with which he treated them. More than one young maiden, pretty, shy, with the quick, budding fancies of girlhood, had her carefully guarded little romance for the handsome, agreeable, manly young fellow.

But in this very fact lay no small danger. Philip was many times the object of fierce jealousy among the younger men. Some of these had sworn in a frenzy of passion to have his life, and more than one had dogged his steps with a murderous gleam in his eyes.

Philip had no suspicion of this. At his age, however, his fancy might have been allured and his feelings stirred, if one memory and one ideal had not come up in swift contrast, and made him insusceptible to other and feebler attractions.

Jealousy, watchful for a while, having nothing to feed on, subsided, and maiden hearts succumbed to other gravitations.

There is no doubt, however, that Philip Fallowes would have been a greater favorite with a large element of Miner's Rest if he had shown more of the hail-fellow-well-met quality; if he had joined the habitués of the saloon, and had done his part at the faro-table.

One of these men, a bright fellow, whom he had just rescued from imminent peril in a mining-shaft, and whose face bore evident marks of dissipation, once expressed this sentiment in a frank outburst of grateful feeling. "You're a grand good fellow, Fallowes! Every soul of us knows that, but, hang you! you make us feel the contrast too strong! A man doesn't enjoy that sort of thing, even if he knows it's gospel truth. That's where the shoe pinches. If you'd go in once in a while for the

whiskey and gamblin' and the devil generally, we might enjoy you a little more if we didn't respect you quite so much."

Fallowes had, of course, believed more than once that a fortune was within sight. Some of the ventures in which he had embarked, and which had swallowed up most of his available means, had failed utterly. But that fact had not one jot abated his anticipation of ultimate success. Every night he went to bed, after a toilsome day, with hopeful anticipations of what to-morrow might unfold, and to-morrow's failure never made the next night's slumber less sound and sweet.

He had held various offices at the mines, which had kept him in funds for all his expenses. There had been no recurrence of the sharp financial pressures of the first year, but this was about all he could say. He was still much in the habit of prospecting by himself. Sometimes, at the close of a day of fruitless labor, he would gather up his tools and apostrophize boulder and gulch and rock-walls. "You must have your treasure-chests sealed up somewhere about, perhaps just over my head, perhaps just under my feet. If you would only unlock one of these to my ravished gaze!"

Yet he had moods, and many of them, when he wondered whether a fellow who possessed so many essential values as he did — such splendid health, such joy in the mere fact of living, such a glorious environment of nature, and with funds sufficient for all present emergencies — had a right to bother himself about making a fortune!

He was occasionally thrown with men who were in the first excitement of some grand "find," which promised a sudden, tremendous change in all the externals

of their lives. Their behavior, at these crises, seemed always to him a fine test of character. Some would be dazed and dumb from excess of feeling. Others would be voluble, boastful, would swagger about, intoxicated with visions of coming splendor and importance, revealing by word and manner the ingrained coarseness which the potential millionaire would never be able to mask. A man of a different type — haggard, weather-beaten, toil-stained — would take the good luck differently. “I tell you, fellers,” he would say, wiping his forehead, and with a tremble in his voice, “this is goin’ to be all-fired good news to a little woman that’s kept up a stout heart, and some chicks, two thousan’ miles to the east’ard! It means settlin’ up the mortgage on the old farm. It’s hung on like a nightmare, and it druv me off here in the first place. Oh, git out!” a great brown hand would be dashed across the eyes, and a big sob would tear its way out of a brawny chest.

Philip, eye-witness to a good many scenes of this sort, wondered, if the time should come, how he would conduct himself in a sudden turn of fortune’s wheel. In all these changed conditions, this rough, hard life, he did not forget the privileges and traditions of his past, — that *noblesse oblige* for which his Alma Mater was meant to stand; he kept up, after a fashion, some habits of his student days; he read his classics enough to feel that he was probably not more rusty than the majority of his classmates; he was surprised to find what new illumination his later experiences shed upon the ancient pages, — what deeper interpretations, what larger meanings, what riper wisdom, he found here than in the old boyhood and undergraduate days. Sometimes, when one of the old Greek dramas had kindled his imagination,

and he heard the winds sweeping down the mountainsides with a roar like that of storming seas, he would throw down his book, rush outside, and, with a responsive, tumultuous joy, he would shout victoriously to the thunderous blasts and the watching stars, some glorious lines from Sophocles, some immortal passage from Plato, or, coming down to a later time and his own vernacular, something from Hamlet or Lear whose grandeur choired with the wild trumpeting of the mountain winds.

Outside of his books, his intellectual companionship was intermittent and scanty. Occasionally, a Harvard man turned up for a short time at Miner's Rest, who revived old themes and associations; but none of his old classmates came that way. At long intervals, a Denver acquaintance appeared, who brought Philip in touch with another life, and who was amazed at coming upon him in such a remote corner.

But by this time Philip had learned that great lesson, which is so hard for youth,—that alike in crowded cities and on lonely deserts, a man has, first of all, to *live* with himself.

A change for the better in the fortunes of the Baynes family resulted, a little later, in Philip's leaving his cabin and joining his friends in one of the new, two-story, frame houses which were rapidly supplanting the primitive dwellings of an earlier era.

From the first, the Baynes family had appropriated their best chamber to Philip. Their feeling that he would bring good luck with him amounted almost to a superstition. It was certain that the position which his recommendation had secured for Abner Baynes in one of the mines, had been the source of the family's improved fortunes. Philip at first demurred at the proposal, partly

from fear of giving trouble, partly because, with his long independence, his inconsequent, Bohemian habits, he dreaded lest domestic rules and ordered times should prove irksome.

But his friends had set their hearts on this matter. With his first visit to the new home, Mrs. Baynes conducted him to the chamber which had been arranged with special regard to his occupancy. The first thing which struck him on his entrance was the magnificent mountain view framed by the two windows. The chamber was furnished with a new pine set of the most vivid yellow tint, and the colors of wall paper, rug, and chairs seemed brought together for the express purpose of effecting the most glaring discords. But the subtle, indefinable, home atmosphere was not lacking, and Philip's comment, as he gazed about him, "Why, this is a lodging fit for a king, Mrs. Baynes!" entirely expressed his feeling.

It was settled at that time that Philip should make the experiment. All preliminaries, including financial ones, were easily arranged. The three years' experience of a log-cabin emphasized the attractions of the new home. Philip found the ministrations of a woman in his daily life very grateful to the domestic side of his nature.

Rachie was in a seventh heaven of delight over his advent. The utmost good *camaraderie* existed between the young man and the little girl. They had endless frolics and long, grave talks, in which the opening mind and heart of childhood, full of eager questions, which often touched the profoundest themes, of pretty confidences and transparent innocence, were almost as delightful to Philip as they were to Rachie.

Here also came Benny Burrows, his curls as obstinate, his eyes as light and keen, and his old-man's air as pronounced as ever. He and Rachie soon established a warm intimacy, varied by occasional sharp disagreements and quarrels, in which Philip — adored of both — had usually to act the part of umpire and reconciler.

Of course the old spectres would sometimes rise up in the midst of this simple, homely life, which, in so many ways, was doing Philip good. He would ask himself whether he had found his rightful place, whether Miner's Rest could have been originally intended as the stage of his activities; whether he was living his life out worthily in making no higher mark, and setting himself to no loftier task in the world. He would not have been himself if he had not felt at times the call of summoning voices, the spur of mounting ambitions.

In those moments of questioning and retrospect which come to all thoughtful natures, one figure was sure, sooner or later, to recur, and as it stood before him, helpless and appealing, it always cast a deeper shadow over his mental landscape.

It was years now since Caleb Crafts had vanished from Philip's knowledge. The man's disappearance had, of course, made a brief sensation at Miner's Rest. Philip's explanation had had its reserves. "Crafts had started to try his luck in some camps far to the north." But the saloons and sidewalks where his fate was discussed, were soon alive with other topics of interest. The brief drama of which Mullins's had been the scene was, no doubt, occasionally revived by some of the eye-witnesses. That event alone preserved Crafts's memory at Miner's Rest. Philip had heard from him two or three times after he reached Grizzly Gulch. The brief letters bore marks of

painstaking effort; the hand was rather tremulous, the orthography imperfect. But it was an immense gratification to learn that no drop of whiskey had passed the writer's lips since he parted with Philip.

The letters ceased suddenly. After a while Philip wrote,—this time to the superintendent of the camp at Grizzly Gulch; he learned in reply that Crafts had gone off with a couple of men—strangers, who had appeared at the camp over night—to a distant mining region, in hopes of improving his fortunes; he had left no address, and there was no clue to his present whereabouts.

These were Philip's last advices; he had long cherished a hope that he should hear from Crafts himself. That scene at Catamount Curve had made a lasting impression; but as time wore on, and silence waxed longer, Philip's hope grew fainter; he made up his mind at last that "Crafts must have gone back to his old habits, and the poor fellow was probably in his grave by this time." Philip's hope died so hardly that he gained a deepened realization of his feeling for the man. Caleb Crafts stood as the symbol of his own saddest failure and sharpest regret at Miner's Rest.

XXVIII

JESSIE REEVES

ABOUT six months after Philip became a member of the Baynes household, he had a small windfall in the shape of unexpected returns from one of his earliest mining investments. As a consequence, he indulged in the most expensive purchase he had made since he came to Miner's Rest; he had bought of her New Mexican owners a small, hardy, full-blooded mustang. The creature was fleet as the wind when her blood was up. The fire of her desert and plain sweeping forbears flashed in her eyes.

It was partly to enjoy his new possession, and partly, perhaps, because the nomadic instinct, which marks the true mountaineer, had got into Philip's corpuscles, that he decided to take a few days' solitary trip into the mountains. But he did not intend this solely as a pleasure excursion; he had heard very alluring stories of rich mineral discoveries far to the southwest; he had learned to receive such reports with due grains of allowance. This time he resolved to see the ground for himself.

The long trip was a novel and intoxicating experience. It seemed that hitherto unsuspected instincts and aspects of the primeval man had come to the surface; he found a new ecstasy in living and breathing in that high, stimulating, delicious atmosphere. His route took him through

a very solitary district of the Great Range. No railroads had yet penetrated it. He followed dim climbing or descending trails, through bare, desolate gorges, into virgin wildernesses of fir and pine, and over stony, jagged ridges, where even Roan—the name which the mustang's mottled color had suggested to her Mexican owner—found scant footing. Philip encountered few people. An Indian or a mountain-trapper sometimes turned up, and he occasionally came upon a rude mining-camp,—a handful of huts and tents and smelting-mills. He slept in the open air, tethering his mustang to a tree, and was asleep under his blanket after a glance at the stars watching him through the boughs; he could understand now how many a young English nobleman, reared among all the traditions, refinements, and habits of an ancient civilization, would, when the primal instincts cropped out, cut loose and come away, to dwell with nature in her large freedom and wild mountain fastnesses, and learn the secret of her joy, the delight “of her wild tendance.” His imagination kindled at thought of the young state lifting her mountain pinnacles to the skies and standing betwixt the great seas which shook each day the eastern and western shores of a continent, as their tides leaped with the thunderous shout of their returning song upon the waiting land. It seemed to him that of all her sister states, the motto of Colorado, *Nil sine numine*, was, perhaps, best of all.

Philip was on his horse the fourth morning, long before the sun was up. He expected to reach by night the camp which would form the terminus of his trip. Two hours after he started, he rode into Trapper's Glen and drew up before a long, low-roofed, adobe building which did service for an inn. It disclosed a row of uncurtained

windows, while everything before the house struck him as singularly bare and unattractive. Philip, however, was hungry and not disposed to be fastidious. After he alighted, he glanced over the landscape. Trapper's Glen was a long, narrow valley between gray rock-walls, which rose sheer and treeless to their ragged sky-line.

"I hope the grub inside will prove more attractive than the surroundings," Philip reflected, as he turned toward the hostelry.

The door opened into a long, narrow, very dingy apartment. A bar occupied the front, and at the farther end of the room several persons were seated at the breakfast table.

A small, dull-eyed, flabby-faced man stood behind the counter, with a row of fresh-washed glasses in front of him. A glance showed that he was, even at this early hour, in the first stages of his daily inebriety. He received Philip's orders, which included a breakfast for himself and feed for his mustang, with a stolid air, mumbled something in his throat, and pointed to the table.

Philip joined his fellow-travellers. The appointments were primitive, the atmosphere was redolent of frying ham, whiskey, and boiling coffee, but Philip was unconscious of these; his attention was now engrossed by the men before him; he had long ago acquired the Western habit of making up his mind promptly about the people with whom he came in contact. In two minutes he was satisfied that he probably had never sat down to breakfast with three bigger scoundrels.

They were evidently of different types and races, but each belonged to the class of pioneer desperado; each had a hard, evil expression; each bold, defiant, or treach-

erous eyes; each had probably played his part in the wildest and worst scenes of frontier experience; each, in his roving, devil-may-care life, might have turned his hand to whatever wickedness came in his way,—to stopping trains or holding up stages, in intervals of trapping wild beasts and fighting Indians.

Philip perceived that these men included different nationalities. One, he judged, was an American; he had a more intelligent face, and evidently a larger acquaintance with the world than his companions. Philip fancied that he would show the coolest nerve and probably be the biggest villain of the lot, if occasion offered; he was also the best-looking, the best-dressed,—the kind of man a raging mob would be likely to choose for its ringleader. The one who sat next, with coarse mouth and dark, furtive eyes, must have come from another stock,—French, with perhaps a strain of Indian blood. The third was unmistakably a Mexican,—small, wiry, sallow-skinned; his bowie-knife and revolver were new and conspicuous; Philip saw the lurking demon behind the sly, suspicious glance.

The men regarded the new-comer curiously. In such society, it was best to be on one's guard, and Philip saluted the men in the frank fashion of Western etiquette; to which they responded promptly. He was conscious, however, of undergoing, during the next few moments, a rapid scrutiny. They were all well armed. The next reflection could not have been reassuring. "I presume you are making up your minds whether it would pay to follow on my track, waylay, and shoot me within the next hour."

There was nothing, however, in the young stranger's appearance to excite the cupidity of these men. He

wore a suit of dark-blue flannel and a sombrero, neither of which had been improved by his travels. They probably set him down as "another poor devil of a miner, trying his luck from mountain camp to camp."

Philip settled himself to his breakfast with the hunger of a mountain traveller. The fare proved better than his first observations had led him to anticipate. Occasionally he exchanged a remark with his companions. The manners of that region exacted a certain degree of table sociability. Philip was alone, and, in case of any possible trouble, could look for no protection from his host. He felt he should be glad when his breakfast and his companionship came to an end.

The door opened suddenly, and a young girl came into the room. Philip was aware of a significant glance which passed between the men. The girl stared about her with a shy, startled look. She evidently had expected to see some person who unaccountably proved to be absent. The American rose promptly, seated her with an air of gallantry, making voluble explanations to relieve her perplexity. He stated that her friend had started out early to examine some curious rocks in the neighborhood, and would reappear shortly.

Philip had a feeling that the man was lying with every word he uttered. But he could not help looking at the girl. How pretty she was! Her clear young skin had a tinge of sun-brown; her eyes were blue as a rift of summer sky which gleams out between breaking clouds, and they had the startled innocence of a child's; her hair lay in youth's brown abundance about her temples; her face made him think of a wild mountain-rose; he noticed, too, the quiet, simple dress,—a shade of soft brown wool with some leaves and buds which made

points of color among the ribbons of her small traveling hat.

The girl returned Philip's gaze, and the faint pink in her cheek heightened a shade. Then he grew conscious that the men's eyes were regarding him furtively. He devoted himself to his breakfast.

But meanwhile his thoughts were alert. How in the world had that young creature fallen into such companionship? It made him shudder to think of it. It struck him that the man who had seated her at the table was making a rather ostentatious display of guardianship over her; he fancied that, in some vague way, she herself was not quite at ease; she glanced several times expectantly at the door. Why did her protector — whoever he might be — delay? Philip's ears were strained for his appearance.

At last, perceiving the utter hopelessness of getting any light on these problems, he rose, bowed to the men, who were probably well pleased to see him depart, paid his reckoning, mounted his mustang, and rode away.

But as he struck the wilderness trail, his heart was not light. Wide earth and air and rejoicing skies had no power now to lift his soul to their mood. His thoughts and interests were full of the group he had left behind him in the low, adobe house, in the solitary glen. He was seeing that young, flower-like face, and the other faces — hard and evil — about it; he was certain that girl was as unaware of the character of her companions as any shy, helpless thing that walks, unsuspecting and fearless, into the snare of the fowler. The face haunted him; at last it seemed to appeal to him, to reproach him; he tried to put it away. "This was a case," he said to himself, "in which it was impossible for him to inter-

fere. The sensible thing, therefore, was to forget all about it."

In order to do this, he started up his mustang into a sharp trot. "We have to make a day of it, Roan," he said, patting her velvety neck; but her fleet hoofs could not bear him away from that face, from those innocent eyes. Suddenly there was another face beside it, as young and innocent, but wholly unlike,—with great brown eyes, beautiful and radiant, with depths and significance of the unfolding soul behind them. If *she* had been there, could he have gone away and left *her* with those fiends? He drew his breath sharply; his hold on the rein slackened. Roan climbed with sure feet the dim trail among the black roots and the big boulders, while the little runlets twinkled and warbled among the wilderness ways. Philip neither heard nor saw; he questioned and pondered. "What possible reason could he give for his return? Those creatures would at once attribute it to the vilest motives! How, unless by a miracle, could he contrive to get a moment's speech of the girl? If he did, what was he to say to her?"

He rode three miles. He drew up suddenly, glanced at the revolver in his belt, and pulled Roan around sharply; he had grown pale, and his jaw was sharply set; he realized fully all the peril which a return would involve; but the mouth under the brown mustache had taken a line of deadly resolve. "Whether it is for life or death, I am going back now!" he almost shouted. Then his voice took a softer key. "I am going back because I have thought of *you*!"

He put Roan through her best paces on the return. It was impossible that he should formulate any plan for future action; he would not allow himself even to reflect

long on what he was about, lest the whole thing should seem too wild and absurd for any sane man to set about.

But in less than half an hour he found himself at the point, just behind the inn, where the wilderness sloped down sharply into the glen. Philip stopped just within the forest-line, to decide what his next movement would be.

A sudden burst of laughter smote his ear. The mirth, close at hand, was loud, jeering, cruel. Philip at once divined its source. The breakfast-triad had left the house, and were having some private confab. He drew Roan behind a great, jagged boulder on his right, and dropped to the ground; he moved cautiously forward to the edge of the wilderness and gazed about him.

Philip was not long in discovering the source of that hateful laughter. On his right, not far below him, the three men had disposed themselves in lounging attitudes among the underbrush and boulders of a low bank. A raised voice, an occasional gesture, satisfied him that they had sought this place for the freer discussion of some villanous plot they were concocting. Was it in any way associated with that young girl? There was but one way to find out,—one way, which, however perilous and unpleasant it might be, the circumstances certainly justified.

Roan had been too well trained not to stand where he left her. Philip moved forward quickly and stealthily over the moss and undergrowth of the slope, until he gained, unperceived, the shadow of a live-oak which grew close to the edge of the bank; he was directly behind the men now; he could catch words and oaths, with an occasional chuckle of hoarse laughter.

Philip's hearing was remarkably acute; he certainly

felt no scruples in making the most of it now; he leaned forward and listened breathlessly.

Less than ten minutes later he lifted his head. In that time he had gone through with an experience of sickening horror, a passion of impotent rage, and a fierce eagerness for some method of swift, deadly vengeance, which had shaken his being to the centre. The plot had been laid bare to him in all the details of its unutterable infamy.

He must save that girl,—he must save her; but how—God in heaven, how?

His face was deadly pale; he looked about at the gray, desolate rock-walls, looked at the far, shining skies, and it seemed to him that all nature had suddenly turned hard and mocking and pitiless. His fingers instinctively worked at his belt. Then he remembered that he was one man, and they were three!

The next thing Philip Fallowes knew, he was standing by Roan's side behind the boulder. How he got there, he did not know; but, no doubt, with an instinct of self-preservation, he had stolen away, undiscovered, from the bank. Suddenly—it could not have been more than three minutes after he had gained the boulder, and while he was making a desperate effort for self-control, so that he could decide on his next movement—a wild shout broke into the air. The next instant it rang with cries and yells. There was a trampling of feet, a rush of men, with fresh clamor and cry.

Philip, peering out from behind his vantage-ground, caught a glimpse of a huge, black, unwieldy shape lumbering across the trail. The bear-hunt was in full cry. Every man who heard it would join in the chase.

This, then, was his chance!

He waited until the uproar had died in the distance, leaped on his mustang, and spurred down the slope; he had no time to form any plans; one invincible resolve possessed him,—to find that girl!

This proved easier than he anticipated. As he drew near the inn, she suddenly appeared in the open doorway, staring about her as though startled by the hue-and-cry, which had swept off every man, even the drunken proprietor, in its wake. She still wore her hat and cloak, as though in momentary expectation of somebody's arrival.

Philip drew up near the door. The girl recognized him with a little start.

"I have come back to speak to you! Will you come out here at once?" His voice had the tense, insistent sound which carries authority with it.

The girl came—her face a little paler at that something in his voice, at the look in his eyes.

By the time she reached him, he was off his horse. There was no time for ceremony. "Will you tell me your name?" he asked.

"Jessie Reeves."

"Well, Jessie Reeves, I want you to look straight in my eyes, and decide whether you believe I am going to tell you the truth."

She did look now, her face getting whiter, her eyes scared, but compelled by his gaze. "Yes; I believe you," she faltered in a moment.

"Do you know those men with whom I saw you at breakfast are demons—that they are plotting to carry you off—that—that—"

A cry of terror broke from her. Then she burst out: "Joe will take care of me. Oh, where is he? I thought he would be back before—he—"

"No, he will not be back." Philip fairly thrust the words at her. "They have lied to him — carried him off — made him dead drunk long ago!"

"How do you know?" she gasped out.

Then, in a few words, he told her how he knew, where he had overheard the talk.

The awful truth struck home now. She staggered and would have fallen if Philip had not caught her. Then the cry of her helplessness and terror wailed out: "O mother! mother!"

"No, Jessie Reeves, your mother cannot help; she is too far to hear. It is you who must be brave, be a woman, now. Our only chance is in getting away before these fiends return. Where do you live — how far from here?"

"At Reeves's Ranch on Rocky Bend. It is fifty miles, they said, from here." She managed to get out the words, but her eyes were strained with fright, and her face was pinched and seemed to have grown smaller. It looked like a withered flower. The talk had not consumed more than three minutes. It appeared hours to each. All the time their ears were strained for the yells of the returning pack, though it was in reality unlikely the hunt would be over so soon.

"Oh, will you help me?" It was a sharp, struggling cry.

"My poor child, have I not told you that was what I came back for?"

He stood silent for a moment, his thoughts taking in the whole situation in a flash, as men's thoughts do in great crises of life. The stage-road, he saw, would be the natural course which the hot pursuit would take as soon as Jessie's flight should be discovered. It led for miles through a bare and lonely region, with an occa-

sional ranch-house,—sometimes tenantless. There was another possible way of escape,—longer and rougher, which wound, by a hardly distinguishable trail, over high mountain ledges and through dense wilderness tracts to Murray's Cattle Range, twenty miles away. Philip himself, in a strange country, had taken pains to learn its topography, wherever he had stopped long enough for inquiries. That foresight was to stand him in good stead now. Once at Murray's Cattle Range,—widely known throughout that vicinity, and of which he had very definite information,—they would be safe from further pursuit; he hesitated when he thought of the blind trails, of all the perils and roughnesses of the way; but in those very facts lay the greater safety. Few animals could hold their own long on that trail. But Philip had tested Roan's endurance and sure-footedness. In that half-minute's silence he had decided.

“Will you go with me, Jessie?”

She bowed her head; she reached out her hands.

He seized the light form; he swung it upon the horse without another word. Then, before he set foot in the stirrup, he paused; he glanced at his revolver. When he spoke, his face was almost as white as the girl's. “They will make no more of shooting me than the wild beast they're after; but you —” his lips twitched — “I could not bear to die and leave you with those wretches, Jessie!”

She understood. A sudden courage flashed in the scared eyes. The little, pinched face grew firm. “You must shoot me, too!” she said, and this time her voice did not falter.

Philip vaulted before her on the mustang; he needed a free hand with Roan.

"It will be a rough ride for you, but you must not be afraid; you must hold fast to me."

Jessie Reeves was a slender girl, but Roan was conscious of the double load and turned her head. Philip stroked her neck, said some soothing words, and gave her the spur; she leaped at the familiar voice and touch; she took the trail with a race before her, swifter and harder than she had ever known. It bore to the southwest, over narrow ledges, by sheer precipices, and on dizzying brinks of dark abysses and among primeval wildernesses, and this time Roan had double lives to carry.

It was nine o'clock when they left Trapper's Glen. The stage was due at Murray's Range at one.

On, on, now, in the name of all that is sweet and tender and sacred in girlhood, of all that is true and brave and helpful in manhood — on, and God-speed!

XXIX

FROM TRAPPER'S GLEN TO MURRAY'S RANGE

It was a little after one o'clock when a small roan mustang, with a couple of riders,—a tall, athletic, young man, with a striking face under his sombrero, and a slight young girl, with a scared look in her large blue eyes,—drew up at the Murray Range House, which was also the place where the stages changed horses and the passengers took their noon meals. It was a wooden building, long, ample, two-storied, and had a thrifty, home-like appearance as it stood in the green seclusion among the valley-meadows, the great, sheltering, close-wooded hills gazing down on it.

But the riders who had come down from the little-travelled and very rough up-country trail into the valley, had no sense of the lovely landscape which greeted them. For hours, which seemed ages, that quiet Range House had been the goal of their hopes. They had made steadily for it over the blind mountain trails, through the heart of the dense wilderness, along the narrow, broken rock-shelves and on the edges of slippery chasms. The young man had first caught sight of the building as they rode out on the slope at the entrance of the valley. He had reined in his horse, turned to the girl, and pointed to the house. She gave a little smothered cry,

and they looked in each other's eyes. Neither could say a word at that moment.

Somebody must have observed them from the house; for the girl had just been lifted to the ground when the door opened and a large-framed man, with a straw-colored beard, a pleasant twinkle in his eyes, and a clay pipe in his mouth, stood there staring at the two.

"Is the stage in?" The young man addressed the range proprietor.

"No. Won't be in for an hour. Accident up the road. Word jest come down. Stage undergoin' repairs."

The man had taken his pipe from his mouth as he vouchsafed this information with a husky drawl and with no superfluous words, while the strangers drew nearer.

Philip's eyes searched, for a moment, the face of the man in the doorway. Jessie Reeves, on his arm, was liable, he knew, to drop the next instant to the ground in reaction from her long terror; his question went straight to the point: "Is there a woman — a kind-hearted woman — inside?"

The man looked blank at this unusual interrogation. Then his small eyes twinkled. "Wall, stranger, if you've rode that up-country trail in search of the genooine article, you deserve to find it. I think I can accommodate you. Jest step in here!"

He showed them into a large, neatly furnished room. Then he shuffled off, and in a moment they heard his loud summons: "Hannah, you're wanted — lively!"

Three minutes later she stood in the room, looking at Philip, who was standing by Jessie, whom he had seated in a chair; her face was rather flushed, like that of a busy woman; her fingers were a little dusted with

flour; she had not waited to take off her working apron; she was stout and plump, and her face spoke for her. It was bright, helpful, motherly.

Philip Fallowes and Mrs. Isaac Murray looked each other in the eyes a few moments. Before he spoke, she had made up her mind to believe every word he said, and he was satisfied that this was the woman he had asked for.

"I suppose this is Mrs. Murray?" he said.

"Yes; my husband said you wanted — some one."

"A kind-hearted woman I said." He turned now to Jessie. "We have come through a great peril. I think you would rather hear the story from her. She needs a woman's care now. Will you see to her, Mrs. Murray, while I look after my horse?"

Mrs. Murray had carried Jessie to her room; had put her arms about her, and said in her kindly, straightforward way: "My dear child, tell me all about it!"

In broken sentences, with sobs and shudders, the last hours were all gone over again.

Living where she did, with the stage bringing twice a day to her door some tang of the wild, frontier life, Mrs. Hannah Murray was a brave woman, and did not go into hysterics as she listened; she was able to soothe and comfort Jessie, even while she was sickening inwardly at her tale.

"Could he be a man — just, do you think?" the girl asked, clinging to the woman.

"What do you mean, my dear?"

"Sometimes I wondered if he wasn't an angel. To come back again to save me after he had only seen me a few moments at the breakfast table — a girl he had never even spoken to! It isn't like men to do that, you know.

And those dreadful places we came over! Sometimes he had to hold me on with one hand and guide the horse with the other. I should have fallen off into those black chasms if I had not shut my eyes tight. Sometimes he would turn round and say: 'Keep up a brave heart, Jessie! I think we shall pull through.' All the time I knew he was listening sharply for the yells of those wretches! Oh, I shall be hearing them all my life!"

"No, you won't, my dear child! You will forget all about them when you are safe and happy once more under your mother's wing."

"And you don't think he was an angel?"

"Oh, no, Jessie! Angels don't go about in sombreros and flannel shirts; but he has done for you to-day just what an angel would in his place."

At that moment Mrs. Murray, glancing out of the window, saw the stage rolling up to the door; she looked doubtfully at the cradle where a chubby year-old baby had kicked off his socks and was crooning to his toes. After an instant her mind was made up.

She left the room in search of her husband. "Isaac," she addressed him as he came in from a talk with his cattle-men, "I am going home with that girl! The poor thing is all broke up and needs a woman's care jest now. I won't leave her until I place her in her mother's arms!"

Isaac Murray stared at his wife, cleared his throat, and asked gravely: "Hannah Murray, ain't your wits got a little frustrated?"

"They're as sound as they was the day when I promised to be your wife, Isaac!"

Then Mrs. Murray related to her husband all she had

just heard. He listened, his sun-tanned, honest face getting a fiery red, until at last his wrath exploded; he dashed his pipe against the chimney-bricks and swore his man's fierce oaths. "I should like to have a stout rope and every one of their precious necks under the biggest beam in my new barn!" He raged back and forth.

After the range-owner had grown calmer and consented to his wife's leaving, she said to him, appealingly: "Don't forget Dan, Isaac! See he has his milk — warm — every three hours, and wrap him up to-night in his pink blanket."

As soon as he had seen Jessie Reeves safe in Mrs. Murray's hands, Philip had carried off Roan to the stable. Then, with him, too, the reaction from that terrible ride had its way. He put his arms about the neck of the panting mare, and for several minutes great laboring sobs broke from his chest.

Philip was greatly relieved, when, after having done his best for Roan, he returned to the house and learned of Mrs. Murray's determination to accompany Jessie Reeves to her home. He had intended to go with her in the stage and return the next day for Roan. But the young girl needed the woman's care and sympathy which Mrs. Murray was so admirably fitted to supply.

In the talk which took place between the two while the stage-passengers were dining, Mrs. Murray gave Philip both of her warm, helpful hands. "If my boy in the cradle there," she said, "should grow up to be such a young man as you have proved yourself to-day, I shall thank God for making me his mother."

Two female passengers were added to the stage-load of half a dozen men who left Murray's Range after dinner.

The men stared at the new-comers. One was a pleasant-faced matron, the other a young, shy girl with a pale, pretty face. A tall, fine-looking man assisted them into the stage and gave his hand to the girl. The passengers noticed that neither spoke. But those two silent young people would not forget their morning's ride while life lasted.

Mrs. Murray leaned forward and said in an undertone, while Philip grasped her hand: "You look like a ghost yourself. Go straight home and lie down."

Philip appreciated Mrs. Murray's advice, after he had returned to the house, had grown suddenly dizzy and would have struck the floor if he had not caught at the nearest chair.

The next morning Philip rode off from Murray's Range. He did not see his host, who had been called away at daybreak. Roan stepped off gayly as though she had forgotten the hardest race of her life. Philip felt once more in splendid condition. All the world was rejoicing with him amid the fresh dews and sunlight. It was a good world—God's world—and the demons would not have it all their own way.

A memory suddenly flashed across him; a deepened joy shone in his eyes. It was *she* who had done it! He felt—he was sure of it! If he had not thought of *her*, if that face had not come up and followed him when he tried to ride away, he should not have turned and gone back.

He took off his sombrero now and waved it in the air as one might to some object of reverent homage. "It was *you* who did it," he said softly. "How glad you would be to know!"

Less than a week later, Philip was at Miner's Rest. Two letters were awaiting him: he had left his address at the Range, and Mrs. Murray had written on her arrival home.

The hired man, — Joe Martin, — in whose charge Jessie had started for a visit to her uncle's, had presented himself in a distracted condition the day after the girl's return home.

Joe was a middle-aged man, perfectly trustworthy, but with scant knowledge of the world. He had arrived with his charge at Trapper's Glen early in the evening. The two intended to pursue their journey next day in the stage which was expected to arrive before noon.

After Jessie's early retirement, the three travellers who had preceded Joe, engaged him in conversation. They had seen the girl, and they soon settled in their mind that her protector was the most gullible of mortals. No doubt they felt a profound contempt for him, when they found how readily he swallowed a silly fiction of twin rocks half a mile off, with a wonderful showing of gold and silver veins — some of them nearly an inch wide. A man who could believe this absurd story, would not be an obstacle in the way of any villanous scheme they might concoct.

The plan for Jessie's abduction had been laid after Joe had left his companions that night sitting about the fire. He had promised to join them early in the morning, when they were to escort him to the twin rocks before breakfast.

Joe Martin had been awakened by rough hands from his drugged slumber to find himself lying under some tamaracks where he had been dragged on one side of the highway after he was too stupefied to understand what

they were doing with him. Threats and oaths were hurled at him. Pistols were pointed at his head; he recognized the three men with whom he had left the inn before breakfast; he was ordered to tell — on peril of instant death — where the girl had disappeared.

His dazed condition, his helpless fright, and his evident ignorance, soon satisfied the ruffians there was nothing to be gained from him. They held a council in which Joe — his wits gradually clearing — learned what a wretched dupe he had been, as well as the fact that Jessie had disappeared mysteriously from the inn. The house had been deserted even by its two or three women, during the excitement of the chase. Nobody was able to give the slightest account of the girl.

One of the men suggested that the stranger at breakfast might have returned and carried her off; but the others, having seen his departure, scouted this idea. The most natural conclusion was, that she had been frightened by the hue-and-cry, and finding herself alone, had wandered out and got lost in the woods. She might have roamed far afield by this time, as it was now nearly two hours since the hunt started. The three set out in hot haste to scour the vicinity.

Joe Martin had been induced to drink before he left the inn that morning, and the draught had been heavily drugged. But the terrible scene of his awakening had sobered him. He had penetrated the whole infamous plot for Jessie's abduction. How easily it might have been accomplished, too! A plausible lie that Joe was awaiting her at a pretty park with flowers and faun only five minutes' walk from the inn! would have beguiled her from the house without a suspicion.

The man made his way back to the inn, where he

awaited in intolerable anguish Jessie's return, or that of her pursuers.

They came at last, sullen and in dangerous temper, from their futile search. Two of the party were now more inclined to regard their comrade's suggestion that the young stranger at breakfast had returned and carried her off, either by persuasion or force, but so much time had now elapsed that it would be useless to start in pursuit. It was natural that a drunken carouse should barely escape ending in a deadly quarrel before midnight.

Joe spent the night in distracted searchings among the woods and gulches around Trapper's Glen. The next morning he set out for home, with a hope that he might die before he arrived there.

When he crossed the threshold, the first sight which met him was the face of Jessie Reeves, as she sprang up with a cry from her mother's side to greet him.

Philip's other letter was from Mrs. Reeves herself. It was brief and written in the first passion of joy and gratitude over her child's escape.

"My Dear Young Man:

My heart is full, for my little girl has been brought back safely to me. My hand shakes and it would be useless for me now even to try to thank you. But be sure a widowed mother will be blessing you to the latest hour of her life, that you—the stranger—came to the rescue, when there was no other, and the ravening wolves were after her child!

ELLEN REEVES."

XXX

CALEB CRAFTS TRANSFORMED

PHILIP FALLOWES sat alone in his room in the summer dusk. It was now nearly three months since his return from his trip into the mountains. In the way of material values it had proved disappointing.

Philip was lounging in his easy-chair. He felt more wearied, as was probably the case with a good many people near at hand, than if he had had a hard day's prospecting among the mountains. The whole population had been carried away by an event the most momentous in the annals of Miner's Rest. That day, a branch of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad had reached a terminus within five miles of the settlement. The great world was next-door neighbor to Miner's Rest! The railroad, by all sorts of devious windings, by dizzying climbs, and zigzag descents, by tortuous turns and wide loopings of its shining rails, had been making for years its slow, steady advances in that part of the Range. The population had turned out *en masse* to see the last rail laid. There had been a grand jubilee. Real estate had gone up by leaps. A grand hotel, with all modern improvements, was to be erected at once. Two handsome business blocks were projected for the immediate future.

Philip had gone with the crowd and shared the uni-

versal enthusiasm. He had listened to the speeches and applauded the orators; but now, after it was all over, and he sat reflecting in his room, he said to himself, leaning his head back in his chair: "Of course the thing is there, under all that noise and buncombe — the high courage, the long patience, and the splendid engineering skill which achieved the miracle! I suppose I am the only man at Miner's Rest who does not feel absolutely sure he will be rich before the end of the year." He laughed a little to himself, but the laugh ended in something that was suspiciously like a sigh. The doubt, and the darker mood which comes with it, even to hopeful, self-confident youth, had crept in upon his soul to-night. The *Cui Bono* of his life at Miner's Rest had risen up now and was confronting him sternly.

There was a heavy tread outside, and between, the well-known patter of child's feet. Rachie's black eyes danced in the doorway. Behind her stood a tall stranger with iron-gray hair and beard. Philip's first regard, as she moved away, took in a very bright crimson necktie and broadcloth, superfine and of the latest fashion.

"Your name is Fallowes, I believe?" interrogated the Unknown, with a prolonged, curious stare.

"Yes, but — really, you have the advantage of me, sir."

"You don't know me, then?" It struck Philip there was a little pleased note in the voice. The dusk had deepened by this time.

"No — begging your pardon — I do not."

"Wall, sir, I've come here on some private business which concerns you as much as myself. It ain't the sort which can be transacted in a hurry, and I calkilate it's goin' to take your breath away a leetle before we git through."

This speech, and a kind of assured familiarity in the manner, puzzled Philip. The flaming necktie and the superfine broadcloth made, on first glance, rather against the stranger. Was he some new species of crank? In the midst of these reflections, Philip drew a chair forward.

The two men sat down; the elder folded his arms and crossed his legs, like one who enjoyed his host's complete obfuscation. "S'pose you take a good square look at me now," he said, after a little silence.

"That is precisely what I have been doing for the last two minutes!"

"You don't mean to tell me, Fallowes, you ain't no idee who I am?"

"Not the slightest, sir."

"Yet it ain't the first time we've talked together by a long shot."

There was a little tremble in the slight drawl of the voice. It struck Philip's ear like the echo of an old memory; he continued his keen gaze a few moments longer, and then he spoke in a low, dazed tone. "It isn't — you can't be — Caleb Crafts?"

"I'm that identical individooal!"

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed Philip.

The next moment both the men were on their feet.

Philip reached both hands, but the man put out his long arms and held him in such a grasp that, even in that moment, he felt he had gained a new conception of what hunters had told him of a bear's hug.

"Crafts," said Philip, when he was released, "I think I must be, at this instant, the most astounded man in the world!"

They sat down again. Philip devoured the man with his eyes. How often he had thought of him — of what

he had tried to do for him — with a sickening sense that all the hope and effort had ended in utter failure and defeat!

“I’ve pictured this hour lots o’ times, when things went hard with me!” exclaimed Crafts, and his lip trembled. “I’ve said to myself, ‘If you can only hold on and fight it out long enough, the time may come when you can go back and look him in the face and say, “I owe it all to you, Fallowes!” ’”

At that instant neither could see the other’s face clearly.

During the next hour, Philip learned many of the details of Crafts’s life since he had vanished from his knowledge. For a long while it was, to quote from the man himself, “the toughest kind of work to keep soul and body together. He had done a heap of prospectin’ in various regions, but luck fought mighty shy of him. Of late, however, he had an idee that he had caught a sparkle of the genooine thing!”

This reserved and rather ambiguous statement made little impression on Philip; he had witnessed the sad ending of too many confident hopes; he himself had been too often disappointed, to feel sanguine over remarks of this sort.

But the man before him was evidence of a change more interesting than any tale of rich finds and prospective fortunes could be. There he sat — the poor, tremulous creature of the old time, with his slackened will and his dulled wits — now strong, erect, alert, his glance clear, his whole speech and bearing full of animation, intelligence, purpose.

For one thing, he looked at least ten years younger. The expression of his youth had come back; Crafts had evolved into a good-looking man!

"All this fine dress quite puts my old toggery in the shade!" remarked Philip gayly.

The elder man laughed. "I remembered who it was liked to see me in good clothes. I went to one of the crack tailors in Denver, and I said to him, 'I want your finest broadcloth and your latest fashions! Expense ain't to be a consideration.'"

Philip laughed this time. But he was more touched than amused, for it was evident all this pains had been taken for his sake.

Crafts's gaze wandered about the room. "You've got into putty smart quarters here!"

"Yes; I felt rather melancholy one day when I found a big gale had knocked the cabin which sheltered my first years at Miner's Rest into a heap of old beams and logs."

"You don't tell me! Wall, you made a good exchange anyhow. It appears you must have had some tall luck."

"Appearances are sometimes deceptive, you know. I am here a tenant on sufferance!"

Crafts looked mystified. Philip went on to explain how it had come about that he was lapped in his present clover.

At the name of Abner Baynes, Crafts broke in: "Oh, yes! I remember him! He was the feller who told his story — did it to the p'int, too — that time the mob was goin' to run you out! I was present and heered his little girl pipe up for you. That was a putty sight. It jest carried the crowd over on your side. Baynes al'ays seemed to me one o' them fellers that luck was goin' to be down on. But there's no tellin' who'll git on top of the heap when it comes to minin'."

Philip assented heartily to this statement.

"Then I understand Fortin has rather turned the cold shoulder on you!"

"Her favors have not been very profuse, certainly. I have had to stand by and see other fellows draw the prizes. But this fact has not made me miserable. I have had splendid health, lots of good times, and gained a world of knowledge and experience, which I never should have done in an easier school. Of course there have been drawbacks. I suppose no man can get on without those; but when it came to the fellows who struck gold,—well,—I should have been mighty glad of a share of their luck, but I never saw the day I would change places with one of them."

"That sounds like you, Fallowes. You're the same—a mite heavier and a shade browner, but as independent, happy, snap-your-fingers-in-the-face-of-the-world feller—that you was nigh upon five years ago."

He sat still a few moments after that, regarding his friend attentively, his eyes full of admiring devotion.

Then he fumbled in his trousers' pocket, and drew out, with some effort, a canvas-bag, evidently well-filled.

Without saying a word, he leisurely untied the string and laid the contents before Philip. Then he spoke. "I want you to look at that—sharp. Take your time now!" There was something impressive in his manner.

Philip bent over the dozen bits of jagged rock which disclosed themselves, with that keen interest which a miner always feels in a fresh specimen of mineral ore. His experience had taught him caution, but after a while he raised his eyes bright with conviction. "Why, Crafts," he said, "these are very rich specimens! They have the true color."

"No doubt about that," Crafts answered, with a quiver of triumph in his voice. "But we ain't got through yet."

The lower contents of the bag disclosed various nuggets — some larger, some smaller — with a final stratum of gold-washings. Philip bent over them for several minutes with intent scrutiny.

"Crafts," he exclaimed, lifting his head at last, "where — how did you come across these?"

Crafts stroked one of his long, thin limbs, evidently enjoying his questioner's amazement. "You're goin' to know later where they come from," he replied, with a kind of suppressed chuckle. "That's the special thing that's brought me here to-night. But there's a story to tell fust."

Then Crafts told it. It took him, with occasional questions and interruptions from his eager listener, until midnight. The story, in brief, amounted to this.

After the long, terrible struggle had ended in victory, and Crafts found that he had mastered the appetite which had held him so long in physical and moral thralldom, new ambitions and purposes began to kindle within him. As he looked out to his future with fresh hopes and resolves, one desire began to form itself in his mind. At last it superseded everything else; it became a passion with him. This was, in brief, to strike gold somewhere — a rich vein of it — and then share the result with the young man to whom he owed his life. "That gold," he communed with himself, "must be somewhere in these Rockies. I'm goin' to search for it, up and down, far and wide, high and low, and some day — perhaps in the most unlikely place — I may come upon it, and then it'll be time to think of goin' back to my young man with a show that'll prove to him I was wuth savin'."

He began the search,—never breathing his intention to a soul,—and for four years he kept it up through all sorts of hard experiences, privations, and disappointments, sustained by the thought that he was doing this for the one friend he had in the world.

One morning, to make the story as short as possible, his mule was picking its way down Graybeard Mountain in the northeastern part of the Range. It was in a rough country, remote from camps. Crafts usually chose such a region for his solitary explorations. He had been at work for several days on various portions of the slope; he had met with no success and his provisions were giving out.

Graybeard Mountain was the highest of the chain of which it formed a link. Its walls were broken and wrought into a myriad of fantastic and ungainly shapes. It was easy to fancy the Titans might have made a playground of that vast rock-pasture and hurled, in frolic mood, or mimic battle, those large fragments at each other. Vivid imaginations might have made out battlements, bell-towers, and turrets in those rough-moulded forms, but the dullest gaze could detect in the long, fringe-like outcrop of gray, shining stone near the summit, which rounded over like the top of a bald head, the special feature to which the mountain owed its name.

As he rode, Crafts was pondering where he should turn next. In all his quest he had never felt so discouraged as he did at that particular moment.

His gaze was suddenly arrested by a cleft in the rock before him. There was nothing unusual about it, but he pulled up his mule and stared at it.

“Now, Caleb Crafts,” he admonished himself, “you’ve wasted days enough potterin’ round and explorin’ this

bare-ribbed old mount'in! There's nothin' in it! You'll make a fool of yourself ag'in if you get off your mule and set to work to another of them holes."

But all the same, and against his judgment, he did get off; he did set to work at the crevice. It widened under his strokes. At last he caught, down in the dark breach, a dull yellow gleam. Chippings of detached rock fell swift now from the fierce-smiting hand. There was another gleam, larger and brighter; he caught the fragment this time and held it up and turned it round in the sunlight; he had learned to detect the marks of the true metal; he held out the piece of rock in his brown palm.

"Oh, Lord," he said, "do you see that!"

Then he buried his face in his hands and sobbed like a child.

When he had grown calmer he looked at his watch. It was just ten o'clock. "I shall call it Ten O'Clock Mine," he said to himself.

The mule roamed at will over the rocky slope all that day; her rider kept his pick going until night; he returned the next day, and for several following days, deepening and widening the crevice. Occasionally his eyes gleamed over some fresh proofs that he had unearthed a rich mineral lead.

All this had happened months ago. Crafts had kept the secret of his find religiously. But he had subjected his specimens to the most rigorous tests. Assay after assay, with frequent chemical analyses, had given substantially the same reports. When the matter was settled beyond question, Crafts had repaired to Denver, ordered of a fashionable tailor one of the most expensive suits in his establishment, selected a gorgeous necktie,

and set out for Miner's Rest. He arrived, as we have seen, on the evening of the day when the town had gone wild over celebrating the near approach of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad.

"The assayists declare a gold-bearin' vein like that ought to yield from two to three hundred dollars a ton," Crafts concluded. "What do you say to them figgers, Fallowes?"

"They are dazzling; they almost take my breath away. But I have enough left to congratulate you on such luck!"

"Congratulate yourself, then! Wasn't I thinkin' of *you* all the time? Ain't I here in Miner's Rest to-night for the express purpose of havin' you set off with me early to-morrow mornin' to stake out your claim next to mine?"

"What a good fellow you are, Crafts! I don't know how to thank you for such —"

"Now stop all that!" Crafts rose, laid his hand, with a kind of solemn dignity, on Philip's shoulder, and asked: "What kind of man was it you wheeled up one night out of Aspen Holler?"

Late as it was when Philip found himself alone, he could not make up his mind to go at once to bed; he had insisted that his guest should remain over night—a matter easily arranged with his landlady. The two were to start early in the morning for the scene of Crafts's recent discovery. Philip, as he paced his chamber, had a curious feeling that he had reached a great turning-point in his career. As a traveller on a summit looks back and surveys the landscape over which he has passed, so Philip looked back now over his years at Miner's Rest. A fortune in the most unlooked-for way might

be opening before him to-morrow. There would be time to think of all that and of what it must mean to him later, but just now other thoughts and feelings would have their way.

I think when one nears the end of the long life-road, those things which one will be gladdest to remember will be the kindly services, the helpful acts, the comfort and courage, one may have brought into other lives. No doubt one will wish all those had been tenfold greater, but one will be glad to remember.

No doubt, too, Philip Fallows had, in these years, done many a kindly service — more or less important — to those who came in his way. Some of these acts he would be likely to recall; others he had probably forgotten.

But there was a group of figures which stood out at this hour — which always would — in the foreground of his memory.

This group included four people. Rachie Baynes, though she was youngest, came first, because she was associated with his earliest hours and his darkest experiences at Miner's Rest; he smiled over the picture of the roguish little black head and the merry hazel eyes. Close by, stood Benny Burrows, square and sturdy, with his obstinate curls and his keen, old-man's head on his young shoulders. Then there was Jessie Reeves! Philip did not smile now! He was living over the memory of that awful ride from Trapper's Glen to Murray's Range! If he could only know the scared look had gone forever out of those innocent blue eyes!

Apart from these stood another figure — tall, thin, gray-bearded, with more years than all the others put together. It was sleeping peacefully as a child in the

next room. The old scenes in the log-cabin flocked up swiftly now. And that man,—Caleb Crafts,—after all these years of search and toil and wandering, had come back bringing his gifts with him.

A great joy thrilled through Philip Fallowes. As he turned toward his bed that night, he could not feel that the years of his young manhood had been wasted at Miner's Rest.

The two started the next morning immediately after breakfast. Philip could not share Mrs. Baynes's regret over her husband's absence. Yet it was hardly possible that he would identify the alert, erect, smartly dressed stranger at the table with the Caleb Crafts he had once known.

They took the early stage which was to carry them to the new railroad terminus. Nearly a day's riding on mules would be before them when they left the last station.

Mrs. Baynes and Rachie stood in the doorway to see the travellers off. The child sent good-bys and kisses after Philip as the stage started.

XXXI

THE MOUNTAIN STATION

THREE months later a company of half a dozen men, including some Eastern capitalists, two mining experts, and a distinguished mineralogist, were gathered at a small, out-of-the-way station on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. The telegraph operator had just reported that the train would be an hour and a half late. The party was tired on their return from a hard trip up the walls of Graybeard Mountain, where they had been inspecting some new mining properties.

The region was a rugged one, conspicuous for steep, rocky walls of reddish granite, for immense boulders, sharp pinnacles, and deep gulches. Parties of this kind do not attempt such journeys merely for pleasure or curiosity. The report of rich veins newly discovered had been so well authenticated at Denver, that the company had resolved to investigate for themselves.

The mountain station was a very slight affair. It consisted of two rooms, the largest containing a stove crammed with wood and going at full blast. A large kerosene lamp was suspended from the middle of the ceiling. A small table, a few chairs, and a settee on one side of the room completed the furnishings.

Some of the party occupied the settee or chairs; others moved about restlessly, discussed the day's events or the prospect of the mines.

"There is no doubt," said one of the experts, a middle-aged man, with a brisk air and an intelligent face, "that the properties promise a fine output. The deeper you go, the richer the veins open. Of course it will require a big outlay at the beginning—machinery and men to get the thing into working shape."

"There is the rub!" rejoined a man, large-framed, with a big, compact head, and a voice which had the authoritative note that voices acquire when they have long been accustomed to attention from their fellows. "We Eastern people have been plucked so often that we are shy of getting mixed up with these new ventures. For myself," he continued, pacing deliberately back and forth, "I am satisfied, after to-day's inspection, that this is not another wild-cat speculation. The ground, I believe, will pay to open up, if it has the right sort of handling. I am prepared to do my part in setting up the necessary works, and all that. But when the company is formed, the stock will go begging in Eastern markets, if it isn't introduced in the right shape. We are tired of tall talkers and stock-boomers; we should like to have a gentleman—all the better if he has large interests in the mines—to whom we can refer, and who will convince New York and Boston capitalists that he is telling the truth."

"I am afraid that such a party will not be easy to find," rejoined the other expert; he was light-haired, with a fringe of yellow beard, and humorous eyes which would have made one set him down as the jolliest of the party. "The soil of human nature isn't prolific in that genus. But I am satisfied this man, Crafts, who named the mine Ten O'Clock in order to commemorate the hour of his discovery, and who has a quaint down-east flavor in his talk, is honest to the core."

The mineralogist, who looked like an athlete and had a bush of reddish beard and a thicket of hair of a darker shade, put in his word after a burst of hearty laughter.

"I had a talk of two hours with the old fellow to-day; he has, with all his oddities, shown a great deal of shrewdness; he kept silent, got his claim patented at once, put his ore through tests that left no doubt as to its grade. I think, from the way the veins dip, the claim next to Crafts's will show as rich an output as his own. It appears that this last belongs to a friend to whom he first confided his discovery; he brought him out here, and the second claim was defined and patented at once. It struck me that Crafts was more interested in his friend's claim than in his own!"

"I have seen him," added the expert who had spoken first. "Met him when I was out here the first time — young fellow from Miner's Rest. Why, it strikes me," turning suddenly to the capitalist, "he is just the sort of man to confer with your Eastern investors!"

"What is his name?" inquired the other, leaning back, with signs of weariness, on the settee.

"Fallowes! I don't recall the whole address; but that, of course, could be easily reached through Crafts. A fine fellow — Harvard man. I saw a good deal of him for several days. Not the sort to play any game of brag or pull the wool over your eyes. A gentleman in the grain, if I know one. If he can be induced to go East, he will give the right figures regarding prospects, veins, and assays."

Just then the party sprang to their feet. They had caught the long whistle of the locomotive through the clear, cold Colorado night.

XXXII

HOW PHILIP FALLOWES REAPPEARED

A shadow fell upon the paper. Tom Draycott, at his office desk, deep in some law-books, glanced up. A young, tall, bronzed man, dark-haired and mustached, with a face which had struck people on lonely plains and in crowded cities, was standing before him.

Tom met the bright, eager gaze with a kind of bewildered stare. Then the stranger smiled. "Have I come so far to find you don't recognize me, Tom Draycott?"

With that voice and smile, Tom was on his feet. "Great heavens! Is it you?" he cried.

I believe that if young Draycott had been anywhere but in a law-office, with people at their desks and others coming and going, he would, on the instant, have been over the railing and hugging that tall, bronzed young man!

That afternoon when Tom returned home, he went straight to Dorothy's room. The day had been warm, and he found her on a lounge in her dressing-sacque. She had a book in her hands, but its interest was gradually yielding to the nap which was stealing over her senses.

"Put up that book!" burst out Tom, as he threw himself into an easy-chair. "I have something more interesting to tell you."

She sat up, rubbing the sleep out of her eyes. With the flush in her cheek and the loosened hair making such a bewitching disorder about her face, she formed a picture which it was a shame there was nobody to see but Tom, on whom it was utterly wasted.

"Is it something very good, Tom?"

"I should think it was—to me! Come! Gather your wits together! Try a guess!"

"How can I without you give me some sort of clue?"

"Somebody turned up to-day whom I was enormously glad to see."

She looked at him reflectively. "Was it somebody that you had not seen for a long time?"

"It was—most decidedly."

There was another brief period of reflection; then a flash of intelligence in the brown eyes. "Tom, it was Philip Fallowes!"

"You've hit the bull's eye this time. He appeared at my desk this morning. When he spoke and smiled, I recognized him. He has grown some shades darker and perhaps an inch or two taller. When a fellow sees in what splendid condition he has come back, it makes him feel it pays to throw up things and go off roughing it half a dozen years in the Rocky Mountains!"

"But why didn't you bring him out to dinner, Tom? Of course we should all have been delighted to see him."

"I did my best. But before he left New York he had engaged to meet some people this evening on business. He has interests in some new mining properties—had a grand windfall, I suspect, after plenty of something very different. The discoverer of the mine is an especial friend, and Fallowes's claim adjoins his own. That man must be a character! What do you suppose he called

his mine because of the time of day when he discovered it?"

"The Sibyl herself couldn't have answered that question."

"Ten O'Clock Mine!"

Dorothy laughed. "Yes; that man must be a character!"

"His name is Crafts—Caleb, I think. Fallowes seems to care a great deal for him, and, I fancy, has some time done him a service or a good many of them. A company of Eastern capitalists has been formed, and they expect to get big dividends when the new find is developed. The claims lie on Graybeard Mountain, in some remote corner of the Northwestern Rockies. Fallowes is here on business connected with the company. There was no time to go into details."

Dorothy had listened to this recital with as much interest as could be expected. Now she broke in: "But what does Philip Fallowes say for himself? Why has he kept in hiding all these years?" Her tone implied some resentment at this neglect of her brother.

"He was dreadfully cut up by the death of his uncle. On top of that came the knowledge that everything had gone to the dogs. Two fortunes—Philip's, I fancy, ten times the bigger—swallowed up in all sorts of rash ventures and wild-cat speculations. 'Poor uncle Rad!' Philip said. 'He was not a business man, and he was shamefully tricked and swindled!' Certainly, there must have been heavy rascality somewhere! It must have been an awful blow when the bolt fell—out of a clear sky, too. Fallowes turned his back on the world, went off into the Rockies,—in their roughest, remotest corner,—and faced his fate alone. It was tremendously

plucky. A man in such straits doesn't feel much inclined to letter-writing. It was like Fallowes to make no sign when things were at the worst; he must have been a long time, too, in riding out the gale. Of course he did not say all this in so many words; but when you know a man well, his reserves may be as revealing as his speech. We lunched at Parker's. It was like the old times. We talked over Harvard and the fellows, and Philip said: 'I have had a world of the old nonsense taken out of me, Tom. It wasn't pleasant, at times, but I suppose that I needed heroic treatment.' "

"I should fancy," said Dorothy, in the light tone of youth and utter inexperience, "it must be hard to live in a log-cabin, among all sorts of rough creatures — Indians, Mexicans, miners, pioneers, to say nothing of neighborly bears, coyotes, and wild-cats! Yet, when I read those live Western stories, I sometimes wish I could have a taste of that life — its wide horizons, its free air, and its delightful fun and hairbreadth adventures."

Tom lifted his eyebrows. "That sort of thing sounds well in novels, but I imagine you wouldn't find the bare facts so rapturous. However, Fallowes is coming out to-morrow night, and you can see for yourself what Western roughing has done for him."

That evening when Dorothy was alone with her father and mother she said: "Tom is in a seventh heaven because Philip Fallowes — I suppose we must say Mr. Fallowes, in future — has returned. I am heartily glad for Tom's sake, that he has appeared again."

XXXIII

THE MEETING AT RED KNOLLS

THE next evening young Fallowes came out to Red Knolls. Tom, who had been on the watch for his friend, met him in the hall, and, after brief explanations, carried him to the drawing-room, where there was company — some scattered groups of young people and a few older ones.

Philip had sometimes, during the past years, wondered with himself whether he should ever be at Red Knolls again; but he had never imagined that blissful event taking place under such inexorable social requirements.

Tom led his friend to his father and mother. It was a singular fact that he had never met them. While Philip was at Harvard, he had received numerous invitations to Red Knolls, but something had always interfered at the last moment to prevent his meeting Mr. and Mrs. Draycott. This occurred so frequently that it at last became a matter of jest with all concerned. It seemed as though some tricky spirit was interposing to keep Tom Draycott's parents and his classmate apart.

But the greeting which he received now from the noble-looking man and the beautiful woman by his side, was so unaffectedly cordial that an observer might have imagined him an old friend.

The introductions were hardly over when a figure detached itself from a group of young people, moved swiftly across the room, and Philip Fallowes and Dorothy Draycott once more stood face to face.

Whatever the moment may have meant to him, there was no external sign of it; he no longer stared, flushed and dazed, as he had that day when he met Dorothy Draycott at Amoury Roost.

She wore to-night an evening dress — in color, a pale-rose tint; in simplicity of lines, perfect to a refined taste. Philip took in, with an instant or two of flashing glance, all the changes — the added height, the refining, maturing processes, the indescribable deepening of expression, the subtle touches of womanhood — which formed a part of what the years had been doing for the girl he had parted from — it seemed yesterday — it seemed æons ago — at Amoury Roost!

Then he heard the voice which had, for his ear at least, a soft cadence, an “inner music” of its own.

“I am delighted to see you once more, Mr. Fallowes. You cannot imagine what hopes I have been building on your return.”

The hand whose touch he remembered lay for a moment in his palm.

Tom stood by with a suspiciously grave face; he knew some mischief lay behind the cordial gayety of Dorothy's greeting.

Meanwhile, she was gazing, with a young girl's curiosity, at Philip Fallowes, trying to compare him with the young undergraduate she had met so long ago, and so briefly. Six years! Her thoughts flashed back over a world of pleasant scenes and happy memories. She had barely time to think that, whatever the West had done for young Fallowes, it had certainly succeeded in making him a big, splendid fellow, when he answered her remark in her own light key.

“You are right, Miss Draycott; I can never imagine

what hopes you have done me the honor to associate with my return."

Dorothy turned at once and laid her hand on Tom's arm. "I have become such an old story here," she said; "I have lost all my influence—all my power to persuade or cajole. I shall look to you now for sympathy and support. Tom thinks your name is one to conjure with, Mr. Fallowes."

The young men exchanged amused glances. Before Philip could reply, somebody struck a key of the piano. A hush stole over the drawing-room. The next twenty minutes were occupied in listening to some very brilliant interpretations of Wagner's compositions by one of the guests.

Dorothy's attention was afterward claimed by others. The light speech had served better than a wiser one. It had relieved the tension of that first interview, without a suspicion, on her part, that any existed. She supposed that the chief interest she possessed for young Fallowes consisted in the fact that she was Tom Draycott's sister.

The party broke up soon afterward. Philip had some conversation with the family, and then Tom carried off his friend to his own room, where the two talked into the small hours.

Philip Fallowes was at a certain disadvantage in Dorothy Draycott's presence. She had been so long set apart in his thought and imagination; she had been in certain great crises of his life so deep and constraining an influence, that it was not easy for him to adjust his consciousness of her to every-day conditions and events. He was not, when they were together, quite his frank, simple, spontaneous self.

XXXIV

CROSS-WINDS AND UNDERCURRENTS

THREE months had passed since Philip Fallowes came East; they had been very busy ones to him; they had involved much intercourse with a variety of people as well as frequent going back and forth between New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. This activity was connected with the Graybeard Mountain Company. Philip was often puzzled to define his exact status in that organization. It was not that of agent or promoter; yet his department seemed at times to include something of both; he was daily consulted regarding the best machinery and material for the new plant. Through one influence and another, evidently set in motion before his arrival, he was brought in frequent contact with capitalists and conservative rich men, alarmed at the conditions of the stock market and seeking investments for wealth that was lying idle. These people sought him out. Unsolicited introductions and interviews became an every-day affair. Groups would gather about him in brokers' and other offices where he happened to be, ply him with questions, and listen with marked deference to his opinions. No doubt his personality and his reserves had something to do with this. When he talked of mining values, he made no sensational statements. He represented the true conditions and prospects, so far as it was possible for him to learn them. One reason of this was the disgust he had con-

ceived for the methods by which new mining properties were boomed and stocks were inflated for the Eastern markets. The wild extravagance of statement, the utter disregard of facts, the reckless dealing with figures, often roused his strongest indignation. Then he would sicken at the thought of innocent victims, beguiled and swindled by these baseless assertions.

His hands, he had resolved, should be clean; he made it a point to discourage women from taking any mining risks; often finding his advice had precisely the opposite effect from that which he had intended.

Meantime, the development of Graybeard Mountain properties was being rapidly pushed forward. Settlers were flocking in. All the early mining processes — drilling, boring, tunnelling, blasting — were in full swing. There was boundless enthusiasm among the men who were on the ground, over reports of the assays and showing of veins. Caleb Crafts was there; his reputation as the discoverer and largest owner in the Ten O'Clock Mine made him an authority in the newly opened region; he was overseeing the development of Philip's claim, and had managed this so successfully that the latter had been able to meet all present expenses, besides having a happy feeling of independence in his financial arrangements with the new company.

Crafts's letters were full of courage, hope, and a pride, simple and transparent as a child's, over his success. The latest advices brought a stunning surprise.

As Philip opened the letter, something light and enveloped in tissue-paper slipped down on the desk in the New York broker's office where he was sitting. He glanced at the thing and proceeded to investigate before he read further. The first page explained that the en-

closed photograph was that of the woman who, within a fortnight, would be the writer's wife!

Philip laid down the letter with a grunt of dismay which, had Crafts heard, would not have exhilarated him. "Some artful female has got wind of his fortune and woven her toils around him. He is too good a fellow to be caught in that sort of trap," were Philip's first reflections. "I devoutly hope she won't prove the sort of woman who will nag him endlessly and drag him down at last into his old ways," thinking of some of the wives he had known at Miner's Rest. He resumed the letter with a rueful look.

Crafts wrote that the acquaintance had come about through the woman's brother; he had been seriously injured by a break-down of one of the gallery-walls in a new mine where he was at work. Crafts had felt and shown much sympathy for the bright young fellow; he had come with his sister—a widow, a number of years his senior—to the new settlement in hope of bettering their fortunes, which were at the lowest ebb. They were living in one of the new pine-shanties at the foot of Graybeard Mountain. Crafts had managed to be of service to them in various ways. The sister insisted he had saved her brother's life.

Certainly, the young man was getting well. There was no excuse for Crafts continuing his visits at the pine-shanty. Then he discovered that the prospect of giving them up was the reverse of pleasant.

"When I see her for the first time," continued the writer, and his lapses in orthography are not repeated here, "I said to myself, 'Caleb, that's an up-and-down, all-round, good woman! She's just one of the kind that the right sort of man could tie to and be blessed for the

rest of his mortal life.' But I had no idea of anything of that sort myself. There were things to remember which would have risen up like ghosts out of the ground, and waved me back from ever daring to think that woman could be anything to me!

"But one day — well — I'd somehow kept up with the visits pretty regular and we'd got better acquainted — though I can't tell how the thing came about any better than you can, Fallowes, when you read this — I found myself telling her what kind of man I had been, and who it was had come across me when I was at the last gasp, and how he had taken right hold and helped me and cared for and believed in and bore with me, when I'd lost all faith or hope or care for myself.

"Woman is a curious creature, Fallowes! When she don't want to believe a thing, she won't, and she'll find the most satisfactory reasons in the world, too, for not doing it! She stopped me right there, as I was stumbling along, — for that sort of confession don't come easy to a man, — and declared she never would hear another word on that subject. 'I've seen the kind-hearted, noble man you are, Mr. Crafts,' she said, 'since you've been coming here day after day, and that's all I want to know. Nothing in the past can change my opinion of what you are now.' Then if she didn't keep on making excuses for all the rest — said she considered a hankering for strong drink a disease, at least, in some cases, for which a man was no more responsible than he was for taking the typhoid fever or smallpox.

"After that — I must have made bungling work of it — I didn't know I had done it until I found it out by her blushes; but I had — fair and square — I'd popped the question!

"And the upshot of it all is, Fallowes, when you look on the enclosed picture, which ain't by no means flattering, you will see the face of a little woman who would be ready to walk across the biggest half of this continent to take your hand and thank you for the sake of one man that owes her, and every other good thing he will ever have, to a certain happy, carry-the-world-before-him young fellow who, about three days later, will be reading these lines."

After finishing this letter, Philip turned, with very dubious feelings, and uncovered the photograph on his desk. The face which disclosed itself was that of a sensible, kind-hearted woman. The longer he studied it, the better he liked it. It was that of a youngish woman, not handsome, but with clear, frank eyes and a touch of smile lurking at the corners of her large, kindly mouth. There were some revealing lines which hinted at past troubles and anxieties. Philip suspected the early marriage had not been a happy one. But experience evidently had not soured the original of that picture.

Philip drew a sigh as he laid it down. For a moment he forgot everything—the spacious office where he was sitting, the hum of voices around him, and below, the great rush and roar of Broadway; he was back again in his log-cabin, in his miner's top-boots and flannels, and the winds were out at play in the Colorado foot-hills. He was surrounded now by the shows, the elegancies, the prosperities of human living. Was he any happier? he wondered. He had at times a vague, elusive feeling that something was lacking in his own life.

There was no day in which he did not find himself longing for the uplifting presence, the solemn grandeur the expansive vision, of his Western mountains.

He slipped back the photograph in the letter with a smile. "That woman," he said, "will be just the right sort of wife for Crafts! He needs feminine care and influence about his life, if ever a man did. I shall send my congratulations and a wedding present!"

As Philip Fallowes was frequently during these days in Boston, that meant that he was frequently at Red Knolls. Tom had exacted a promise that he would invariably show himself at the law-office when he was in the city. The natural sequence was, that Tom would insist on his friend's returning home with him. The household welcome which greeted him must always have satisfied any scruples he might feel regarding his recurrent visits.

But Tom was sure to quietly assume his right to Fallowes's time and presence. Nobody felt like disputing this. Once in Tom's room, the two young men would live over their undergraduate days, or Philip would relate scenes in his Western life, until the walls rang with young manhood's shouts and laughter.

But all this time, Philip Fallowes and Dorothy Draycott were hardly making sensible progress in their acquaintance.

She kept up with her brother's friend her gay, rallying talk, but it was with a slight consciousness of effort. Feeling has its own subtle power of impressing others. Dorothy never dreamed that the depth and strength of his own impressed her with some inexplicable uneasiness and annoyance—partly with herself, partly with him. She did her best, for Tom's sake, or for various other promptings, which she never attempted to analyze, to get on with his friend, but with what she regarded as dubious success. The charm, the cleverness, the

flashing mirth, which were so effective with others, seemed somehow to miss their mark in his case. Fallowes was, of course, a gentleman, and listened to her talk, and often surprised her with prompt and gay or appreciative response, still — Dorothy did not finish the thought to herself; but a girl knows perfectly when she does not feel flattered.

Philip himself was conscious of some restraint in her society; he, too, was vaguely uncomfortable; he had a suspicion that his long life in Western wilds had rather unfitted him for the finest social atmospheres. He was naturally rather mortified at this thought, and nettled to feel that he could not make himself as agreeable as some of the admirers who hung upon Dorothy's words and smiles. Philip wondered at their presumption; he secretly resented their jests and flatteries. They seemed to him little short of sacrilege with such a girl.

But if he did not show to the best advantage with Dorothy Draycott, if he affected her atmosphere with a slight chill, his ear never lost a cadence of her voice, or a sudden burst of girlish laughter that was sweeter to him than the song of robins in April rains. It was a rapture to be with her, and yet it was often a relief when Tom appeared, as he was certain to do in a little while, and carried him off.

As time went on, Mr. and Mrs. Draycott were more and more satisfied that Tom had chosen his dearest friend wisely. People are always, under all masks, revealing their true selves in tone and look and speech. Philip did this in a thousand unconscious ways, and then Tom was always repeating his speeches, which, though they often came from a light and jesting mood, had their own interpreting quality.

It is one of the mysteries of this mysterious human life, that two people between whom exist many deep and vital sympathies, should yet, by some "twist of circumstance," some surface misapprehension, be more or less alienated and repelled. In the case of these young people, the deeper chords of their natures were keyed to many identical harmonies, yet some baffling, elusive fate seemed always to come between and hold them apart, as it probably would not, had their sympathies had a narrower range and been of a more superficial quality.

Dorothy had a feeling that young Fallowes regarded Tom Draycott's sister as a rather gay, superficial, young woman. A clever girl always resents that sort of thing.

One day, when the two happened to be alone together for a few minutes, she suddenly changed the light mood which had become the habit of their brief interviews, to a graver one; she spoke of some of her favorite authors; she alluded to books which had been making a sensation in the literary world.

Philip listened politely, if not very responsively. The truth was, he felt a good deal embarrassed when Dorothy paused, and it came his turn to speak; he apologized, rather ineffectively, for his rustiness and inability to discuss these matters. "I find myself," he added, "a good deal of a barbarian since I emerged from my Western solitude."

Dorothy suspected him of some secret irony. Did he fancy she had certain literary conceits? The attempt to drag in the subject seemed to her now abrupt and ill-timed. Tom soon appeared, and the two went off to his room. Philip had made Dorothy provoked with herself,

and a woman does not always like a man any better for doing that.

But if young Fallowes did not hold his own in Miss Draycott's society, he had his successes elsewhere. The rich capitalists and brokers with whom he had business relations were so agreeably impressed, that he had frequent invitations to dinners and parties of all sorts. The tall, handsome young man was quite at ease in elegant drawing-rooms. Mammās and daughters were charmed, and more than one of Philip's rich hosts remarked to his wife, "My dear, that is just the sort of young fellow who would suit me for a son-in-law."

One day, after Fallowes had made one of his brief visits at Red Knolls, Dorothy said to Tom: "What very jolly times you two have by yourselves! I passed your door last night, and when I heard the fun going on, was strongly tempted to do a little eavesdropping. Whatever reserves your *Fidus Achates* may have with others, it is evident he lays them aside with you."

"Reserves!" echoed Tom. "I have never discovered them. Of course such a sensible fellow as Fallowes is not given to wearing his heart on his sleeve."

"Nobody — so far as I know — desires that he should. Of course Philip Fallowes is a splendid fellow, and I am ready to endorse your adjectives, but I do insist he is not the easiest person in the world to get on with, when it comes down to ordinary talk. Perhaps such a superior being regards all that as beneath him!"

"Oh, I see what you mean!" Tom stretched his long limbs in the chair. The talk was taking place in his own room. "Of course Fallowes doesn't affect the small talk — the superlatives and flatteries of your admirers; but he is head and shoulders above the whole

crowd. I always wonder, Dorothy, how a girl like you can stand all their — silliness.”

Dorothy laughed — the low, easily stirred laugh of young girlhood. “O Tom,” she said, “you poor fellow! if you were a girl, you wouldn’t wonder!”

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XXXV

WHAT DAISY ROSS SAW

ONE day, not long after the above conversation took place, Dake Cramley and Daisy Ross, who had come out to spend the night at Red Knolls, met young Fallowes.

Tom had always been sure that Dake had not forgotten their first meeting. The iron of it had entered his soul. Of course Fallowes had no idea of this. Even in his most careless, undergraduate days, he had been too good a fellow to deliberately hurt anybody's feelings, but the effect of his manner had not been lessened on that account. Tom had simply mentioned to Dake the fact of Fallowes's return, and remarked, casually, that his long rough-and-tumble at the West had taken down some Sophomoric notions and conceits. He saw the two would be likely to run upon each other any time at Red Knolls, and that the sooner the first meeting was over the better.

Tom watched, quiet but curious, when the two were introduced. It was at once evident that the name had wakened no chord in Philip's memory. There was nothing now in Dake Cramley's appearance which should make his presence a surprise in the drawing-room at Red Knolls.

But though Dake was doing his part in the conversation, Tom felt he would not be sorry when it came to an end. In a few moments, therefore, he went over to Daisy, who was talking with his mother, and assuming,

as he was apt to do, indisputable possession of that small maiden, carried her over to his friend.

"I want to present to you, Fallowes," he said, "my special pet, Miss Daisy Ross. She knows something of you already, and you cannot please her better than by relating some of your Western stories."

Other company was present. Tom bore off the not reluctant Dake in his own jesting, high-handed fashion. For the next hour the young man and the little girl had the talk all to themselves. There was no pause in it. Philip's own Western experiences struck him in a new light as he watched their effect on his young listener. That vast Western world seemed to have fascinated her childish imagination. Everything he told her was as fresh and delightful to Daisy Ross as reports from a traveller come down from the moon. Sometimes she would be fairly convulsed over his comic pictures of camp-life, his descriptions of pioneer ways and characters, and his imitations of their talk.

"O Mr. Fallowes, this is what Mrs. Bray would call 'just killing'!" she broke out at one time, breathless with laughter. "I did not suppose anything in the world could be quite so funny!"

"Yes, Miss Daisy, all that was immensely funny. One needed plenty of that sort of thing to carry them through others — not so funny."

"Yes; I can see that." Daisy responded with a rapid comprehension and a transition of tone and mood which seemed, for the moment, to make her a woman. "In such a great, wild world, many things must be rough and hard. I wonder how the little girls get along with it."

"The one I knew best seemed certainly to have a

happy time. She was gay as a lark from morning until night."

"I'm so glad! Won't you tell me her name?"

"Rachie Baynes."

"It is a nice sort of name. Did you know her very well?"

"Oh, yes — very! I lived, you see, with her father and mother a long while before I came East."

"Then that was the way you first got acquainted with her?"

"Well — not quite. We were friends long before that, Miss Daisy, when she was only a toddling, lisping thing, just over her third birthday."

As Philip talked, the little, roguish head, the laughing, hazel eyes, and the black rings of hair, always in a pretty disorder about the face, with its red cheeks and incomplete nose, came up before him. It was in great contrast with the dainty loveliness which was smiling before him, but the first had its own wild-flower charm — its own fresh, childish innocence.

"Mr. Fallowes," said Daisy, drawing closer to him, her face very serious now, while her voice sank to a lower, confidential key, "did anything happen when you first knew each other — anything, I mean, which would make a story?"

"What in the world made you think of that, Miss Daisy?" He stared at her in surprise.

"It struck me all of a sudden there might be! I — I wish you would tell me, Mr. Fallowes!"

"Well — yes — I must confess there was something which *might* make a story!"

"Oh, won't you tell me — please?" How large and eager her eyes had grown!

She was irresistible. There was no secret about an event with which all Miner's Rest was familiar. When Philip began, he related the scene as one does when he is not talking merely, but living a thing over. He heard again the child's cry of sudden terror; he was off his mustang; he was rushing down to Indian Creek; he had caught a glimpse of the little, black head in the current, and before he knew he was in the stream, he was making for that head.

When he had told her about the rescue and the scene which followed at the blacksmith's, he went on to describe the little girl herself. She was the dearest thing, he told Daisy, that he had left behind him when he went away from Miner's Rest.

"And does she remember how you saved her?" Daisy asked breathlessly, when Philip paused.

"She thinks she does. But I can hardly conceive that possible." Philip was speaking half to himself now. "She was a mere infant; she has heard the scene so often talked over between her father and mother, that she is perfectly confident she remembers it."

"Mr. Fallowes," rejoined Daisy, and her eyes shone, and there was a tone of grave conviction in her voice, "I think — I am sure — Rachie remembers!"

The look and tone again took him by surprise.

For an instant he felt an impulse to tell her what Rachie had done for him at the Good-Luck shaft. But that was a long story, and would involve much explanation of things which had preceded it. Then there would be the inevitable personal note through it all. He decided this, at least, was not the time or place to introduce the subject.

While this talk had been going on, there were other

voices — light or earnest — about them. More than a dozen people had accidentally come together that evening, and the air of Red Knolls always induced a sense of freedom and cordiality among the guests — always stimulated, more or less, the aspiring thought and brought the enlarging vision.

Philip had not answered Daisy's last remark when Dorothy Draycott suddenly left her seat, among some young people, and joined the two sitting on the lounge in a corner.

"What a good time you and Mr. Fallowes are having all by yourselves, Daisy!" she exclaimed, and her touch on the girl's shoulder was a light caress. "I have been glancing over at you occasionally."

"Oh, Mr. Fallowes has been telling stories about the West, Miss Dorothy! They are just wonderful, and you never heard anything so funny!"

Philip and Dorothy exchanged smiling glances. "I know Mr. Fallowes's stories are very delightful, Daisy, when one is fortunate enough to hear them."

At that moment somebody in the group which she had left beckoned to Dorothy. Her presence was evidently needed in something that was going on. With a murmured excuse she hurried away.

Philip and Daisy watched the slender figure as it moved across the floor, and as her eyes turned to Philip, they caught the expression in his own.

"You like Miss Dorothy very much indeed, Mr. Fallowes, don't you?" she exclaimed, with the utmost guilelessness.

Philip reddened like a schoolboy under those bright, interrogating eyes. "What makes you think so, Miss Daisy?" he managed to ask.

"Oh, I can tell," setting herself a little farther back on the lounge, and speaking with the most confiding assuredness; "when people like others a great deal, they look at them — differently!"

Philip laughed an amused, conscious laugh. Before he was ready for a reply, Daisy went on, in that voice which made a sweet, brook-like ripple along the words: "But you don't know, Mr. Fallowes, half how lovely Miss Dorothy is! When I saw her the first time, and she brought me out to Red Knolls,—of course it is a very long time ago and I had a great deal to learn,—I thought she must be an angel, and walked all round her to find where the wings were joined on!"

Philip laughed heartily at this, and then he asked gravely, "And did you find the wings?"

"Of course not! I see you are making fun of me, Mr. Fallowes. I know now it was very silly. When I told Dakie, he said she did not need the wings. You know what he meant?"

"That Miss Draycott was angel enough without them. That was a very nice thing for Dakie to say."

"Dakie always says nice things, Mr. Fallowes — things that go straight to the point."

"Dakie is Mr. Tom's friend, I believe. Is he your brother?"

"Oh, yes!"

"But you do not strike me as looking the least alike."

"Well, Dakie is my very own brother," rejoined Daisy, with a kind of triumphant conviction in her tones, "though we are not in the least related, Mr. Fallowes!"

Philip had nothing to say at such an irreconcilable

affirmative and negative. Then there was a stir in the room. The guests were departing.

Not long afterward, when Tom had joined his friend, and the family, with Dake and Daisy, were talking on the opposite side of the room, Tom suddenly remarked: "Well, Fallowes, what sort of impression did my small friend make on you? I saw you two were keeping up an animated conversation for the last hour."

"Impression! She is the brightest, most bewitching creature, in the way of little-girl humanity, I ever came across. Where did you get hold of her?"

"It was Dake Cramley who first discovered and brought her to us." As Tom spoke he glanced over to the youth who was talking with his father.

Then Philip repeated Daisy's last statement, and begged Tom to explain the paradox.

Tom laughed. "Oh, that is very easily done. Cramley is her adopted brother."

"But there must be something behind. How did those two come together, if one has a right to ask?"

"It is a long story, with a great deal of human drama. Sometime, perhaps, I will tell you."

Tom saw he could not do this without relating more or less of his own share in events. He had no desire, just then, to pose as benefactor or hero, so he added: "Go up to my den, Fallowes! Dake and Daisy are to stay over night, and you, of course, will do the same. I shall have him up for a while. I want you and that young fellow to see something of each other."

Tom was certain that Dake would have preferred remaining with his own family in the drawing-room, but he had his own object in view, and carried him off.

An hour later, when the two were alone together,

Tom felt he had no reason to regret his movement. Old events might still occasionally rankle in Dake's memory, but he had seen his eyes kindle over Philip's enthusiastic praises when Tom adroitly brought up Daisy in the conversation.

"That young fellow has a good face," Fallowes remarked as soon as Dake had left the room.

"Good!" repeated Tom. "He's gold!"

"I had a feeling, more than once, that I had met him somewhere before!"

"You had!" Tom managed to keep the note of surprise out of his monosyllables.

"Yes. I have a good memory for faces if I have once observed them. But it is not likely I have ever seen Cramley's. He probably reminded me, in a vague way, of some Western man."

XXXVI

MRS. DRAYCOTT'S MINUTE

DOROTHY DRAYCOTT was in her mother's room one morning. She was humming some light tune to herself as she placed in a long, narrow-stemmed vase, a couple of deep-red roses and surrounded the glowing bloom with white sprays of lilies-of-the-valley. The humming, scarcely louder than that of the bees among the flowering shrubs outside, suddenly ceased. "Mamma," she exclaimed, as one does when a passing thought ultimates in speech, "I do not believe Philip Fallowes altogether approves of me!"

"What nonsense!" said her mother lightly, but turning her head from the table by which she was standing, to look in some surprise at her daughter.

"Oh, I do not mean," with a low, amused laugh, "that he has ever quite admitted this to himself, but I am satisfied that, in his secret soul, he regards me as a rather light-minded, much-on-the-surface, young woman—to be placated a little, perhaps, because I have the great good fortune to be Tom Draycott's sister!"

"What can have put this absurd idea into your head, Dorothy?"

"Oh, a good many small things—hardly worth relating. But I can feel people's atmospheres. Philip Fallowes does not evidently find it easy to get on with me; he never says nice things to me; never seizes a chance to pay me a compliment. If we happen to be together, it

is always something of a relief to him when Tom appears and they can get off together. But I am not pining over this indifference. There are, fortunately, other people in the world who do not share Mr. Fallowes's opinion!" She bridled her head, partly in mischief, partly with a girl's natural consciousness of her power.

Mrs. Draycott laughed and raised her eyebrows significantly.

"That sounds, I know, slightly conceited, but what were mothers originally designed for?"

"Will you tell me?"

Dorothy crowded down a last spray into her vase and surveyed the result with pleased eyes.

"For their daughters," she returned, glib and playful, "to have somebody to whom they can show all their conceits and vanities and worse things, and with whom all these will make no difference!"

Dorothy's instinct, usually so true, had gone wide of the mark this time. A vainer girl might have reached a different solution of young Fallowes's behavior.

Some interruption at that moment prevented Mrs. Draycott's reply. The talk made so slight an impression that it did not recur to her until — something happened.

It was, perhaps, a fortnight afterward, when Tom brought his friend, who was in Boston again, out home with him for the night. After breakfast, the young men found they could, by a free use of the telephone, have a couple of hours' grace to themselves. Dorothy, occupied with some callers, knew nothing of this.

Late in the morning, the young men came down-stairs on their way to the station. Tom suddenly remembered some legal documents he had left behind him, and, with

a murmured apology, rushed back to his room. Philip turned into a large apartment which opened into the hall to wait for his friend.

Dorothy suddenly entered this room; she did not perceive Philip, who was standing in a recess by the window; she supposed he had long since left the house with her brother. But she did see Hidalgo lying on the rug, and though she was in a hurry, stopped, as was her habit, to pull the beautiful creature's ears and stroke his big head; she wore a light shade hat; she had been out in the ground with her young friends and the fresh air and the merry talk had brought a joyous light to her eyes, a deepened flush to her cheeks. Hidalgo bent his head to the caressing hand, and then suddenly pricked up his ears and leaped from it.

"No, Hidalgo," said Dorothy, interrupting the movement. "Tom is miles away by this time."

Then she lifted her head, turned, and walked rapidly from the room. The next moment Tom came downstairs, and Fallowes and Hidalgo met him in the hall.

But somebody had seen! Mrs. Draycott happened, a moment before, to enter the alcove which opened into the larger room. She caught, through the parted portières, Philip's entrance, and was about to advance and address him when Dorothy came in.

What Mrs. Draycott saw did not probably consume more than a minute, but it was something she will never forget. It was the look in Philip Fallowes's eyes as he bent them on her unconscious daughter. She felt that no single word could fully interpret that look—at least, to herself. If there was tenderness in it, there was something else—something worshipful—some passion of reverence and gratitude. It seemed to her a man

might turn and look at a woman in that way just after she had saved his life, or something that was more than what the world calls — life.

But Grace Draycott had never seen in a man's eyes — not even in her husband's — just that expression which she had seen in Philip's. It held her breathless; it struck her pale through all the surprise of her stirred mother-heart.

She went straight to her room; she did not want to meet Dorothy just then. But as she went, the talk about Philip recurred to her. It was clear to her now as the landscape is when the lightning leaps from the storm-cloud.

Mrs. Draycott locked the door; she sat down; the look in Philip's eyes pursued her. Was she sorry? Was she glad? She could not tell; she only knew, in a little while, that her face was in her hands and that they were hiding her tears.

XXXVII

HOW PHILIP WENT TO CHERRY FARMS

THE two young men, facing in opposite directions, turned the corner and almost ran into each other. After the greetings were over, they returned together to Tom Draycott's office, where Fallowes had just been in search of his friend. The interval between the Boston visits had been longer than usual; hence, both felt a special gratification at this meeting. They were talking eagerly when they entered the office. A letter lay conspicuous on Tom's desk.

"It is from Dollikins," he explained. "I brought it in town and left it inadvertently on my desk when I rushed out on Devonshire Street. She has been at Cherry Farms with aunty Dayles for the last week. She is having an enormously good time. I made up my mind at breakfast to cut business and join her for two or three days. We used to go there at this season when we were small boy and girl, and have kept up the tradition, so far as possible, ever since. I intend to take Dorothy by surprise."

Fallowes laughed. "What a grand lark you are going to have! It will be to you, Tom, I should fancy, a good deal like the old Amoury Roost days! You brought me up sharply with your 'Siste, Viator' behind the laburnums. I lived over all that scene a good many times in Colorado."

A new idea struck Tom. "What is there to prevent our repeating that time, in a slightly different form, Fallowes? Why not let things take care of themselves for a few days, and go off with me to Cherry Farms? What a big jollification we could make of it! The trout are ready, in the hill streams, to jump at our flies."

Philip's eyes flashed and his cheek reddened. Tom observed both, and was satisfied, however he might demur, what his first impulse had been.

"Thank you, Draycott. Your programme is delightful, as such things are apt to be when they can never be carried out."

"But what stands in the way of this one?"

"Oh — a world of things!"

"Condescend to particulars — please!"

"Well, what would everybody — what would your sister, for instance — think of my appearing in such a cool, take-for-granted fashion as you suggest?"

"Everybody — Dollikins included — would be happy to see you. You will be at home at Cherry Farms at the end of five minutes. Auntie Dayles — of course you know something of her — will make you certain of your welcome with one of her smiles and three words. Now, Fallowes, don't let any nonsense keep you from going along!"

The argument did not end here. When Philip perceived that all personal scruples were lightly set aside, he fell back on other objections — business, prior engagements, and urged them the more insistently because of the inward impulse which was strongly drawing him in the opposite direction. But Tom carried all his defences — with some lawyer's ingenuity, no doubt — but his heart was very much in the matter. The half-hour's

talk ended by his adjuring Fallowes to give him this pleasure, after immuring himself for six years—for which, by the by, he should never quite forgive him—in Rocky Mountain solitudes.

So Draycott won the day. Fallowes was to go a few miles out of town that evening, but he agreed to be at the station in time to board the train which Tom was to take the next morning, when the two would proceed in company to Cherry Farms.

“So both the kids will have taken themselves off!”

Donald Draycott made this remark to his wife when they were alone together, after dinner. Tom had, at that meal, related his interview with young Fallowes, and the arguments and persuasions by which he had at last induced his friend to accompany him to Cherry Farms; his own trip, as they knew, having been suddenly decided on at the breakfast-table, after reading his sister's letter.

“Yes; but you and I have never found it oppressive to be alone together!”

“Hardly!”

“What do you think of Tom's carrying off Philip Fallowes with him?”

“It struck me as a capital idea. Dorothy will be overjoyed to see Tom, and the two fellows will have a glorious time among the trout streams and tramping over the country in this glorious weather. It makes me feel young to think of it.”

Grace Draycott looked up reflectively at her husband. She had been greatly startled by Tom's announcement at dinner; she had not seen Philip since that time when she caught the expression in his eyes as he suddenly

bent them upon her unconscious daughter. His look had haunted her ever since; at times she wished she had never seen it. But all the same, he had been constantly in the foreground of her thoughts. The wonder was — a greater wonder to herself than it could possibly be to anybody else — that she had never confided the matter to her husband. A hundred times she had made up her mind to speak. Then some feeling, difficult to analyze, had restrained her. For one reason, it seemed impossible to translate into words the look she had surprised. "Donald," she said to herself, "would be apt to suppose her imagination, or her maternal feelings had carried her away." That would be worse than keeping silent.

Then she shrank from interfering in this case, as she certainly would not in that of an ordinary lover. But she could never recall the look in young Fallows's eyes as he stood in the window embrasure, without her heart growing tender toward him. She had been learning a great deal about him during these last weeks. It was an easy matter to lead Tom, who, of course, had not the faintest suspicion of his mother's motive, to talk of his friend.

Mrs. Draycott had, too, a woman's intuition that the feeling she had surprised would some time force itself into expression — the more powerful, perhaps, because it would have to break down the strong barriers of Philip's reserve. What the effect would be, even her mother's insight could not forecast, but she had a feeling that if Dorothy ever understood all that one glance had revealed, it would touch some depth in her nature which other lovers had not succeeded in reaching.

Mrs. Draycott was conscious that the two must be

brought into more intimate personal relations during these days at Cherry Farms than they had ever been at Red Knolls. Tom's presence, however, would have a diverting effect, and he would be certain to claim the lion's share of his friend's society. Should she not let these things take their own course?

A weaker woman would have spoken long before this. Grace Draycott's character was capable of strong silences.

Her husband had opened a volume from which he was reading to her in the evenings, and in which both felt a deep interest; he had not observed the long, silent, reflective gaze she bent on him. "Yes," she said, answering his last remark, "those young people will, no doubt, have a high jubilation at Cherry Farms. You and I will stay at home and play our rôle of 'Old Folks in the Chimney Corner.' Go on with your book, Donald—please!"

XXXVIII

DOROTHY DRAYCOTT'S SURPRISE

It was late in the afternoon. Dorothy Draycott, brushing her hair before the mirror, heard suddenly a strong, virile voice ring up from the hall below, "Can a lone stranger find food and lodging for the night at this hostelry?"

Dorothy threw down her hair-brush with a startled cry, sprang to the door, and bounded down the stairs. The next moment her arms were around the neck of a tall, broad-shouldered, young man in a dark-gray travelling-suit, and she was saying, breathlessly: "Oh, Tom, you blessed creature! What a surprise, and how glad I am!"

"I have torn myself from indignant clients and pressing cases to keep our ancient May-days," he said, after a brotherly return of her caress. "I shall depend upon your being overwhelmingly grateful, and cherishing and adoring me for the angel I am!"

"Tom, I will devote myself to you; I will obey your lightest whim; I will be your bond-slave!"

"That is all my modesty asks. Now prepare yourself for another surprise. I have brought somebody with me!"

"You have!" The monosyllables had hardly passed her lips before Dorothy had a prophetic flash.

"Yes," continued Tom, with an off-hand volubility which did not deceive his sister. "I had to make as

strong a plea as I ever did to move an obstinate jury to get him off with me."

Another presence, Dorothy felt, would be a restraint on that perfect freedom which had always been so dear a part of their May-days at Cherry Farms. She had barely time to be on her guard when Tom led her to a room on the right, and with a glance her prophetic instinct was verified. Young Fallowes was standing before her.

Dorothy was equal to the occasion, though her cheeks flushed, remembering her little pink dressing-sacque and the hair that, in her rush down-stairs, had broken loose from its fastenings.

"O Mr. Fallowes," she said, giving him her hand, "how good you were to come! I hope you will be as happy as Tom and I always are at Cherry Farms."

Tom, who had, during the journey, an occasional mis-giving as to Dorothy's unmixed gratification at the appearance of his friend, was satisfied with her welcome.

A little gay talk followed, and then a small woman's figure, with a face serene and sweet under the soft gray hair, appeared at the door. "Where is my big boy, Tom?" asked the mistress of Cherry Farms. "I heard his shout in the hall."

Tom was at her side in a moment, and his greeting had all the fervor of a happy boy. Then he took Mrs. Dayles over to his friend. "I was determined to bring him with me if I had to do it by main force," he said. "I was certain, aunty Dayles, you would set his numerous scruples at rest, if I once got him under your roof."

Mrs. Dayles looked at the young man with her kind, earnest gaze, after she had given him her hand. "Tom

was right, Mr. Fallowes," she said in a moment; "I am glad to welcome you to Cherry Farms."

Anybody could have spoken the words. There were few who could have interpreted them with such a smile and voice.

Cherry Farms had an individuality of its own. If you once crossed its threshold, you found yourself wishing, in a little while, that you might never leave it. There was something in its peaceful, reposeful atmosphere which stole over your senses—into your soul. No single word can express it; but the consciousness that you had entered into the heart of a home—into that which interpreted its meaning and its life—enfolded you like a spell.

The farmhouse, of a light-gray tint, was large, substantial, wide-roomed, with deep piazzas on three sides. It had been well preserved, and might be from thirty to fifty years old. It harmonized with the landscape, which was that of the beautiful hill-country of Vermont.

People, driving past, would draw up on the highway and stare at the house with its ample front, its slope of shrubs and gay flowers, and the double lines of grand cherry-trees on one side, and say to themselves, "I should like to get inside!"

Those who did, found the small, soft-spoken, bright-faced mistress seem as fitting a part of the house as that did of the landscape.

Here the young Draycotts had come through their childhood to get the air of the hills into their blood, and the simplicity, the freedom, the wholesome quality of the old farm-life into their souls; to get, in short, closer to nature, and take, unconsciously, into their minds and hearts, the lessons which the great Mother

alone can teach. It was a conviction with Mr. and Mrs. Draycott that their children owed to Cherry Farms something which even Red Knolls could not have given them.

Before the supper was over, that which Tom Draycott had predicted for Philip Fallowes had come to pass. He felt as much at home at Cherry Farms as though he had always been living there. Mrs. Dayles was sure to make her personality felt anywhere; but, at her own board, with its hospitable abundance, she was at her best. She had her own ideas on the whole subject, and the force of character to carry them out.

To her the table was the heart of home — the dearest and most sacred thing, in many of its aspects, of the household life. She saw, too, it was the place where a woman naturally presides; where her heart and brain can make themselves most decisively felt; where she must inevitably create an atmosphere, and give the key-note to the talk.

From the early days of her wifhood, Mrs. Dayles had resolved to exclude from her table, so far as was in the power of its mistress, all the gossip and carping speech, all the unkind and bitter remarks, all the holding up of the weaknesses and faults of others to criticism and ridicule, which she knew too well, formed the staple of daily talk at so many of the home-tables of Christendom.

“The things that weaken and distract and wound will come into our lives as they do into all lives, Benjamin,” the young wife had said to her husband. “But they shall not come to sit with us at our board, even if that is a humble one. We will bring our best and happiest selves, our kindest speech, our tenderest thoughts for others, when we gather at our table.”

The woman who could make such a speech — make it with her heart as well as her lips — would be likely to have the purposeful nature to carry it out. Those who sat at Mrs. Dayles's table could not fail to feel, more or less, according to their kind, the spirit of the place.

The evening of the young men's arrival was a pleasant one to all concerned. Tom and his sister talked of Amoury Roost and of Daisy Ross, who was to have her second birthday festival there.

"What a charming time Mrs. Amoury will make of it!" exclaimed Dorothy. "She has a genius for such occasions. You and I, Tom, are to have our good time later, with the dozen! You must remember them as the funniest part of your visit to Amoury Roost, though you have had so many more important experiences since that time."

Dorothy had turned smiling to Philip as she spoke. She meant to be very polite to her brother's friend, and to be glad that he came.

"Oh, yes, Miss Draycott, I remember the dozen perfectly," Philip replied, but he did not add that he entirely disagreed with the last clause of her remark.

Tom broke in here. "Important experiences! I should think so! Now, Fallowes, I want you to relate some of those rib-splitting stories you have told to me!"

Tom was persistent, and chose those stories which had struck him. Philip showed his keen perception of character, and his vivid descriptive powers, as, urged on by Tom, he went from one story to another. His audience was, for the next half-hour, in frequent convulsions of laughter.

After supper was over, the young men were much occupied in making plans for the next day. Dorothy talked with Mrs. Dayles. Later, however, when Tom

and Philip went out to observe the sky with a view to weather prognostications, the ladies joined them on the piazza. Tom gave his arm to Mrs. Dayles and Philip walked with Dorothy.

It was a warm May night, with a soft gray veil of cloud, thick enough to hide the stars. But a half moon showed occasionally a blanched face among the clouds.

However, it was a moon of moons to Philip Fallowes. The girl with whom he was walking was the girl he had walked with so long ago at Amoury Roost. The two nights got a little mixed together in his thoughts.

"The moon is very considerate to come out and give us an occasional glimpse of herself," exclaimed Dorothy carelessly, seizing the first thing it occurred to her to say. "Do you see her, Mr. Fallowes — a spectral sort of thing, against those gray clouds?"

"I see her! What does the moon make you think of, Miss Draycott?"

The moment the question had passed his lips, it seemed to him the most inapt remark he could have stumbled on! "Had he come to Cherry Farms to make as dreary an affair of it, when it came to any talk between them, as he had at Red Knolls?"

"I am not going to take the moon's part!" said Dorothy, with her gay little laugh. "I believe she has much less to do with our thoughts than our own moods. You see I am a hopelessly prosaic, unromantic young woman. Will you tell me what the moon makes *you* think of, Mr. Fallowes?"

"She has made me think of our last walk at Amoury Roost. There was a full moon then, and she was not playing any game of bo-peep among the clouds."

Dorothy was rather taken by surprise. "Did he begin

to feel that it was time to pay some sort of compliment to Tom Draycott's sister, if it was by way of the moon?"

But he should see her vanity was not going to appropriate anything so ambiguous! "You must have a remarkably tenacious memory for moons, Mr. Fallows," she said, with that little bewitching movement of her head which he knew so well, "to be able to recall that especial moon after seven dozen others have waxed and waned! But I do remember our walk at Amoury Roost. We had some talk, too. It was mostly concerned with Tom and his classmates, I believe."

"I have made a fool of myself again!" was Philip's mental comment.

The others joined them at that moment. The conversation became general and, in a little while, they all entered the house.

The next morning Tom appeared at the breakfast-table and saluted the others with a decidedly lugubrious expression. When Dorothy caught sight of his face, she exclaimed in dismay, "Oh, what is the matter, Tom?"

"Matter enough!" he replied, slapping down vindictively a telegram by the side of his plate. "I found this thing awaiting me as I left my room. It is from a client, whom recent advices from abroad compel to sail on Saturday's steamer. His case is to come off soon after his return. It is of the utmost importance that he should see me before he goes. He is coming to Saratoga, where his family are staying, for that very purpose. In order to meet him I must take the next train—shall not get back, in all probability, before day after to-morrow. I feel at this moment that Cherry Farms, the most delicious weather in the world, and hill-streams alive with trout are only a delusion and a snare!"

Everybody was voluble with sympathy. Tom was, however, at bottom, more chagrined for his friend's disappointment than for his own.

After breakfast there were only a few minutes to spare. Tom managed to secure an aside with Dorothy in the sitting-room. "I am awfully cut up to go off and leave Fallows in this way," he confided to her, "after dragging him off with me and talking up Cherry Farms sky-high. I am afraid it will be horribly slow for him."

"Your opinion of the society to which you leave him is the reverse of complimentary." Dorothy rejoined dryly; but the next instant her tone changed. "O Tom, I am so sorry for you! It is awfully annoying. Is there any way in which I can help you?"

"There is — just one."

"How — pray?"

"Make it as pleasant for Fallows as you can. Girls know how to do these things. Won't you beam your brightest on him?"

"I always supposed the lack of 'beaming' was on his side. But I understand, Tom. I will do my very best. You may trust me."

"My horizon is already clearing. You are the dearest little torment in the world, Dollikins! There comes the buggy! Fallows is going with me to the station."

He snatched a kiss; his feet rang on the piazza. Dorothy waved her handkerchief from the window as the buggy drove away.

XXXIX

THE POEM PHILIP FALLOWES REMEMBERED

WHEN Philip Fallowes returned, half an hour later, he found, rather to his surprise, Dorothy Draycott awaiting him on the piazza. She wore her hat and was drawing on her gloves, for a walk, evidently. She certainly was a lovely object to contemplate as she stood there, her brown eyes radiant, a little mischievous smile lurking at the corners of her mouth. She wore a gown of soft fabric and light amber tint. A little shade hat harmonized with it. It is sufficient to say of the latter that it struck Philip Fallowes as the most bewitching thing, in its way, a woman ever wore.

Dorothy had spent much of the last half-hour in reflecting how she could best carry out her promise to Tom. Her motives were, no doubt, complex ones. There was, first of all, her promise to Tom, and her sympathy with his disappointment; but underlying this were a good deal of girlish mischief and fun, with a certain pique, and something else which she could not explain to herself—something which gave a touch of annoyance, a shade of resentment, to her feeling for Philip Fallowes.

The result of her reflections had been summed up in her conclusion. "I have got him at close quarters now, and—well—I have promised Tom to do my best; which means, of course, 'smiling and beguiling.'" Then she

laughed to herself a little, gleeful laugh, with a bit of provocation at bottom, thinking that Fallowes was coming back now, looking forward with anything but rapture to the prospect which awaited him.

"Fortunately, some other men would feel differently," she said to herself, and "other men" would have forgiven the touch of girlish vanity in the words, if they had seen the spirited pose of the beautiful, young head.

For his part, Philip had some compunctions as he drove back from the station, remembering Tom's annoyance at being forced to leave him. Philip's own feeling was a tumultuous joy and amazement that this thing had come about — that he was to have this day with Dorothy Draycott, instead of going fishing with her brother! He wondered if he were dreaming! Certainly, things did not happen like this in every-day life! He felt a strong impulse to shout and throw up his hat like a boy. Then his rapture cooled, remembering what a muff he always made of himself in Miss Draycott's presence.

Philip lifted his hat as he mounted the steps; he had no suspicion that the smiling, blooming, young girl awaiting him there was much on her mettle.

Dorothy addressed him at once. "Tom's spirits have a wonderful capacity for rebound. I hope he had recovered them by the time he reached the station."

"They had; he charged me, just as the car started, with a message for you."

"What could it have been?"

"That you were to remember the promise you made him."

"And did he tell you what that was?"

"Not a syllable."

"Well, I am going to do it, Mr. Fallowes! I was to

be very good to you to-day — a sort of guardian angel, in short!”

“Ah, my dear,” Philip’s quick thought went, “you have been that so many times, and you stand there with your lips smiling and your glorious eyes shining on me, and you do not know!”

Then he flushed slightly, finding that he had actually called Dorothy Draycott in his thought, “My dear!”

What he said, certainly, was far enough from anything of that sort. “That was immensely kind of Tom!”

“And so Tom is to have all the credit and the compliments, and I not one sign of acknowledgment or syllable of praise!” reflected Dorothy.

In spite of this, she kept on beamingly: “And I am going to set about my rôle of ‘guardian angel’ at once! You cannot escape it, Mr. Fallowes! It is a part of their function, I believe, to be very insistent. I am going to invite you to accompany me to our ancient apple-tree. It is the oldest in the orchard, and the first place Tom and I visit when we come to Cherry Farms. We once had a fancy that the birds sang a little sweeter in its boughs than anywhere else.”

“I shall be charmed to place myself in the hands of such a guardian angel!”

It struck Dorothy that this speech, though it was the conventional thing, came nearer to a compliment than anything Fallowes had yet said to Tom Draycott’s sister.

They went down through the deep, lush grass of the lane, under the double lines of noble trees which gave Cherry Farms its name, and which now made one snow of bloom over their heads and another under their feet. It was a May morning — the last of the year. The

spring was going on her old way — crowned and full-laden — into the arms of summer. Overhead, the sky was one sparkling azure, unbroken by a wisp of cloud. The air was full of the fragrance of blossoming orchards; the fields were in the fresh glory of New England wild flowering — gold of dandelions, and red of clover, and snow of daisies.

The walk from the house to the orchard, even when feet sauntered by the way, would not consume more than ten minutes. It led through a narrow, twisting meadow-path, and near an old stone-wall which separated the meadow from a pasture-lot. In this, and not far from the wall, grew a rose-bush — a thorny, many-branched, straggling thing, but holding up now, on one delicate spray, a handful of wild-roses, — its first ones, — their petals shining deep-pink just above the gray wall.

Dorothy gave a little cry of pleasure when her glance first caught them. "O Mr. Fallowes, do you see those lovely things? They are the first wild-roses I have come upon this spring!"

Philip stood and gazed with her; but he did not move. Any other young man in the wide circle of Dorothy's acquaintance would have seized his opportunity — would have leaped over the stone-wall, plucked the roses, and brought them to her with his handsomest bow and his most graceful compliment. It seemed to Philip that the scant cluster of wild blooms was not a fitting gift for the girl at his side. No doubt he would have been ready to risk his neck to bring her the loveliest flower in all that May-world, if its rare bloom and fragrance had struck him as symbolic of herself. But, of course, Dorothy never dreamed of this. For the second time that morning she was provoked with him. She would

have liked that bright color at her belt. "Brothers' friends," she reflected, "might not prove the most agreeable escorts in the world!"

With a little effort she put her momentary chagrin aside. It was not his fault, certainly, that he was at Cherry Farms to-day, and thrown on her resources for entertainment. Was it some irony of fate which had brought them together to walk through this lovely May-morning, with something puzzling and baffling between them — she could not tell what? She glanced up at him doubtfully as she asked herself this question, and was struck, as she never had been before, with something in his face — a strength and force — a certain nobility of type which must mean character behind it. She had always thought Philip Fallows handsome, but this thing she saw now was quite distinct from the moulding of his features, the dark shade of his hair and mustache. As she glanced up occasionally at Philip's profile, Dorothy's mouth was settling into a firmer line. Her resolution had come back with redoubled force. They kept up, with a slight effort, more or less conversation; but Dorothy was telling herself that she would "seize the first chance or make one, that the day was before her, and she was not going to be defeated."

A few moments later they had passed from the meadow, crossed a little foot-bridge over a shallow stream that made a tinkling song among the stones, and were in the great Cherry Farms orchard.

It was like entering a vast garden of pink and white bloom, of delicious scents, of stillness and shadow meshed with sunshine, of morning dews still sparkling amongst the grass. Each tree made a bower of fragrance and bloom; each scattered with every touch of

breeze, a shower of soft petals upon the green. Dorothy led the way through a half-overgrown foot-path to the great patriarch of the orchard. Its widespread, knarled and knotted limbs were clothed in as fresh bravery as any of its younger sisterhood. A large, rustic bench stood under the ancient tree. Dorothy closed her parasol, and the two sat down.

Each probably had a general idea of extending their walk in a short time. The robins seemed bent on singing their hearts out in that sunshine, that fragrant air. The two drank in the beauty about them with young, glad eyes. The love of nature was a passion with both.

Dorothy never dreamed that had any other girl been sitting in her place, Philip would have found it the easiest matter in the world to keep up a light, gay, flattering strain of talk.

But though she herself, enjoying the scene,—so full to her of pleasant memories and associations,—was not eager to break the silence, all her feminine instincts were on the alert. She was bent on seizing her first chance — no matter how slight — for making an advance on Philip's reserve.

He spoke first. "My uncle Radleigh used to say that May was the poem of all the months to him. I see now what he meant."

"That was a poetic fancy. Do you like poetry, Mr. Fallowes?"

The moment her question was out, she saw its absurdity. She might as well have asked him if he liked nature or beauty!

"I like some kinds of poetry, Miss Draycott." She saw him smile a little, and fancied he must be secretly making fun of her. Well, she deserved it! But she

kept on in order to retrieve the effect of her last question. "People who like poetry of 'some kinds' are almost sure to have inspired moments themselves. Haven't you a muse of your own, Mr. Fallowes?"

"If I have, she was not 'inevitable' enough; she deserted me when I went off into the rough-and-tumble of Rocky Mountain life."

"Then you confess — dropping all metaphors — that you have, at some time, written some poems?"

"I confess to some schoolboy and college rhymes. A callow youth is apt to be guilty of things of that sort."

Dorothy began to have a feeling that her chance arrow might not have gone so wide of the mark.

"Mr. Fallowes," she said, smoothing the folds of her parasol, and glancing at Philip out of the corners of her eyes, "I wish you would repeat some of those rhymes!"

"Really, I have forgotten the things, Miss Draycott. But, in any case, I would not impose such crude stuff on you."

Those sidelong, smiling glances were regarding him very intently. "But one would be always likely to remember something of one's own in that line — something that an event, an association, or a person, would be sure to hold fast in the memory."

"Perhaps so. At least I am not able to answer for other people."

This time Dorothy detected a touch of embarrassment in Philip's laugh; she saw that he had taken refuge in a general remark.

Dorothy Draycott was an impulsive creature, and she had been used all her life to acting upon her impulses. A young girl, much accustomed to admiration, even if she had that fine quality of character, that saving salt

of good sense which kept her from being spoiled, would have felt piqued at what Dorothy regarded as her cumulative failures to awaken any sort of interest in Philip Fallowes. But high spirits, running a little riot in the life and beauty of the morning, and girlish mischief were largely responsible for her sudden change of tactics.

"Mr. Fallowes," she said, looking at him demurely from under the shade of her straw-hat, "I promised Tom to be very good to you. Do you think it quite fair that my goodness should be the only kind in evidence?"

"Certainly not, Miss Draycott. I am ready to exhibit my own on any field you may suggest."

"Then will you tell me whether you recall a single poem you ever wrote?"

He flushed and looked conscious this time, but he managed to say, after a moment's perceptible embarrassment, "I certainly cannot recall two."

Dorothy dropped her eyes; her fingers smoothed the fringes of her parasol meditatively. Some experiences of her own proved of service to her now. "One would not be likely to forget the first poem that one ever wrote," she said. "It would be an event. Do you remember yours, Mr. Fallowes?"

"No more than I do my first word." In spite of his real embarrassment, Philip perceived he was being steadily driven to the wall by subtle feminine processes.

Then Dorothy turned and brought all the spell of those bright, challenging eyes to bear upon him. "Mr. Fallowes," she said, with such charming entreaty of voice and tone that it seemed no mortal man could resist them, "will you show your goodness, as you promised, by repeating your *last* poem to me?"

This time Philip's face burned. He was conscious

of it, which did not make the matter easier for him. There was a little pause. How loud the robins sang in the trees!

Philip's thoughts and emotions were, for an instant or two, in a very chaotic condition.

But memory was busy at that moment. He was wondering how it would have seemed to him in the old Colorado days, if he could have foreseen that the future held for him an hour like this — an hour when he would be sitting with Dorothy Draycott amid the May blossoms of a New England orchard, while she urged him to repeat the poem, all unconscious that it had any relation to herself, which he had written after he had first seen her in the pine woods! Should he — could he — do it? It began to seem to him the right and fitting thing. After he had gone away, would he not like to look back and remember this hour, and be glad he had done what she had asked? The scene, the circumstances, suddenly struck his imagination as being in fine harmony with all which had gone before! If he refused now, would he not regret it always?

Meanwhile, Dorothy was watching him keenly from under her dark-brown lashes. She was on the *qui vive*. The whole thing began to be interesting, exciting, like a play. But she sat very still. The pause seemed longer to Philip than to herself. When he spoke, he had made up his mind.

"The circumstances were, perhaps, a little peculiar." He stopped short and brushed off, unconsciously, some of the petals which had drifted to his knee.

Dorothy's thought leaped to a swift conclusion. There was some romance behind this. She was sure of it. And these big, masterful creatures who carried the

world on their shoulders always needed a little feminine tact to help them out of — places! A triumphant laugh was rippling all through Dorothy, but it only peeped out cautiously in her eyes and glimmered at the corners of her mouth.

“Those are what I am also eager to hear — the circumstances,” said Dorothy softly and demurely.

“They will not take long to tell. I was alone at a hotel,” Philip spoke lightly and rapidly now, as one who hurries over details, “in a rather out-of-the-way place, where I had come the night before to await the arrival of some friends. The next morning I started off for some fishing in the neighborhood. On my return I came upon some old pine woods. The shade and coolness were delicious after my exercise. I went in and threw myself upon the ground. In two minutes I must have been fast asleep.”

“And then — something happened?”

“Yes.” Philip paused a moment in the effort to make his descriptive sketch as brief and slight as possible. But there was no danger that Dorothy would get any inkling of the truth. Nothing within the range of her knowledge — nothing in her preconceived ideas — could have given her the remotest notion that she had any personal relation with Philip’s story.

“A young girl,” he resumed, “rode into the wood. I woke at the sound of her horse’s feet; I was lying in the shadow of the trees and she did not discover me; she checked her horse, — a superb creature, — gazed about the wood, patted his neck and talked to him. Then she fastened her hair — a part of which had fallen loose — and soon rode away. The scene did not last, probably, five minutes.”

"But it was long enough to inspire your poem, Mr. Fallowes?" Dorothy veiled mischievous glances once more with those brown-lashed lids. "After such an introduction, I am more eager to hear it than you can imagine."

In this way — with just a touch of feminine coquetry in smile and glance and tone — she had brought him to the point!

Philip's voice had a fine, resonant quality and the verses — when it came to those — did not lose anything in his rendering.

I

Through my slumber flashed a sound
Where the swift hoofs beat the ground,
Where the pale lights lay across
The pine-needles and the moss;
And a face gleamed in the gloom,
Like a tall, white lily's bloom;
Then I saw her sitting there
In that cloud of loosened hair.

II

She was in the dew and dawn
Of her girlhood's joyous morn;
And her great, brown, glancing eyes
Swept the wood in glad surprise;
And their splendor dazzled so
That the pine-boles seemed aglow
In the green wild where I lay, —
Where I watched her ride away.

III

I shall hear her voice again
As she stroked her horse's mane;
Hear her laugh — its low, sweet sound
In the plaintive pine winds drowned;
I shall see the glad surprise
In those great, brown, glancing eyes;
See the red-gold in her hair
By the sunbeam slanting there.

IV

But the Marvel of that time
Swells to deeper chords my rhyme;
And the praise supreme, instead
Of all lesser praise be said! —
When I saw that young girl's face,
Its rare charm — its unnamed grace —
As I gazed up from the sod,
Seemed to draw me nearer — God!

Dorothy listened — the fun and triumph fairly rioting in her veiled eyes, and finding it all she could do to keep the corners of her mouth in their natural curves. "Yes; it was as she had thought — he was repeating a lover's ditty to her — original, at that! How had she brought it about? With his reserves, too, and in less than half an hour! Was it a tribute to her own fascinations or partly owing to the morning and the blossoming apple-trees and the birds in full song up there in the boughs?"

Philip had only glanced at her once during the recital — a glance that just grazed the delicate profile and caught the listening attitude.

His voice ceased. A change, a surprise, a kind of awed bewilderment, had crept into Dorothy's veiled eyes. That last verse — especially that last line — had come so unexpectedly, giving a new meaning to the poem — shedding a great interpreting light upon it. It was like the effect of some sudden burst of grand organ-music into a careless, trivial mood — summoning the soul to the higher aspirations, the larger endeavors, and the nobler activities of life, and lo! in a moment one is on another plane, in a finer air, and with a broadened horizon on every side.

The pause was a rather prolonged one. When Dorothy broke it, she did not lift her eyes; but the subtle change which comes of an altered mood was in her voice as she asked, "Mr. Fallows, would you mind — will you be kind enough to repeat that poem again?"

Philip repeated it.

XL

THAT MEMORABLE MAY-MORNING

DOROTHY lifted her head and looked Philip in the face. "Mr. Fallowes," she said, "do you know those words are the greatest—the best—a man could possibly say of a woman?"

"Yes; I know, Miss Draycott!" It struck her there was a little, exultant thrill in his voice.

"And—excuse me—did you ever see her after that?"

"Oh, yes—several times. We had, as I learned afterwards, some mutual friends."

"I should have imagined that must have been a great test for her. The familiar—the common daylight—is apt to be—disenchanted. One who has high ideals is liable to be jarred or disappointed," she added, half apologetically.

"I understand you, Miss Draycott. But—she bore the test." That little, exultant note in his voice struck her ear again.

"And she did not know about the poem?"

"She did not know," said Philip; but he felt a slight twinge of conscience.

Dorothy was all alive—thrilled now with an eager interest and curiosity regarding that unknown girl—the heroine of Philip's lyric. Here was something finer and higher than she had ever dreamed. No doubt

it was romantic, but it was so much more than that — it had the noble ideal — which raised it above all weakness and mawkish sentimentality. She was eager to ask a hundred questions about the girl, but her insight was too true to admit of her doing that. It would only mean the “lesser praises,” only be striking the lower note. One remark, however, she did venture. “Did you say, or did I imagine, that she was very young?”

“Very. A mere slip of a girl — a child on one side of her nature, as I found when we talked together.”

Dorothy felt she could go no farther. But after a short silence, her curiosity, or some deeper feeling, forced her on. She drew a long breath; she bent a little forward. “Mr. Fallowes, I have no right to ask you another question, but,” with just a touch of appeal in her voice, “is there nothing more you can tell me about that girl?”

Philip was silent a few moments, — long enough to make Dorothy feel that her impulse had carried her too far, — when he turned suddenly and looked at her. She met, for the first time, the depth and power of his dark-gray eyes when they were irradiated with feeling. They fairly dazzled her.

“It is not all I can tell you, Miss Draycott,” he replied, with a low vibration in his voice. “That young girl — the thought of her, the memory of what she was — were all in the world I had to cling to when every hope was gone and every prop had failed, and she — well — she saved me!”

The words thrilled some new chord in Dorothy’s nature. She drew another quick breath and still her hands, from which she had drawn off the gloves, kept

up their unconscious movement with the fringes of her parasol.

And again she asked, "And she does not know?"

And again Philip answered, with that little inward twinge, "She does not know."

When Dorothy spoke next, it was in a slow, faltering tone, unlike her usual, swift, clear one. "It is all very beautiful, but—I cannot understand it."

If Philip Fallowes and Dorothy Draycott were relating this story, I do not believe either could remember just how it began. But in a little while he found himself telling her of that night at Miner's Rest when his young manhood's heart and courage—for the first time and the last—had all broken down, and his life had lost all purpose and incentive. As he talked, the deadly homesickness, the awful solitude, the crushing despair, came back again, and the mad impulse to get rid of these in any form—at any cost; he could not, of course, dwell long, to those young ears, on the point where his misery had reached its nadir, but her quick apprehension seized the vital import of those rapid sentences.

Then the later scene had its turn; here the story lingered and missed no detail. The scene was drawn in clear, sharp lines; he was making his way with mad desperation down the rude trail when the moon rose over the mountain peak—just the moon in her old way—but that night she brought with it her message for him. In a moment he was not seeing the moon any more; he was seeing the face of that girl in the summer-morning, among the old pine-boles; and it was meaning to him all that it had meant for him then; and the memory—the purest and finest one he had

brought away from his past — had been powerful enough to bring him to a sudden halt, to hold him, to fill him with such remorse that he turned back. And Philip told then — as only the man who had lived it could tell — of the hours that followed in the dim, moonlit pine woods, and of the resolve he had formed that night and never lost sight of amid all the struggles and temptations, amid all the stumblings and failures which had followed. It was a young girl's face, — a young girl's memory, — but they had come back, and again he said exultingly, "they had saved him!"

Dorothy Draycott sat very still; she had listened with all her senses and with all her soul; she could not have believed anything so high and beautiful could have happened in real life. If she had read it, she would have thought such things belonged to the realm of noblest fiction — to the dreams of poets. Her fingers still kept up their involuntary movement among the fringes of her parasol, but her eyes were on his face — those eyes that seemed to listen; that had drawn him on; that had witnessed for her, as no words could have done, how his story had stirred her — how deep the response of her soul had been.

When the pause came at last, and it was her turn to speak, she said, "But there must have been the living afterward!"

"Yes," said Philip very gravely; "there was the living afterward, or the trying for it."

Dorothy traced some figures in the young orchard-grass with the point of her parasol. Philip watched the bowed head and waited for her to speak, and wondered if he should awake in a little while and find all this the most blissful of dreams.

Dorothy looked up suddenly and said, swiftly, appealingly, "I wish you would tell me something more, Mr. Fallowes."

"There does not seem anything more to tell." Philip answered, as though he questioned with himself.

"Oh, but there must be! I mean things must have happened — times must have come — when such a memory, such an influence, would be present and powerful. She — the thought of her — must, I think, have helped you to help others."

Her instinct had gone swift as an arrow to the mark! Philip felt that profoundly in the pause which came before he answered. "You are right, Miss Draycott. If ever chances came up when I could do something for other people, my first thought was, how it would strike her. I did it largely for her sake — as a kind of inadequate acknowledgment of all she had been to, all she had done for, me."

"Oh, I wish — do excuse me again — you would tell me something about those other people!"

This was the way she led him on — at least, so far as words could — but her eyes, her voice, a little tremulousness about the sensitive mouth, — all had their cumulative effect. After he began, it was not easy to stop. Philip told something of his life at Miner's Rest, and what he had tried to make of it. Then it was natural that, with such a listener, the talk should take a more concrete form. Philip was telling Dorothy Draycott about the night he went down into Aspen Hollow, compelled there by the memory of that young girl, after he had turned away and started for his cabin. He was careful not to mention the name of the man whom he had rescued, and Dorothy never dreamed of

identifying it with that of Caleb Crafts, the discoverer of Ten O'Clock Mine, the friend of Philip, and the man largely associated with his present fortunes. Neither did he enter on the details of the long struggle which had ensued in his cabin; but Dorothy imagined more or less of that, while he went on setting in strong lights the loyal nature, the real manhood, which had been rescued and rehabilitated.

When the story was done, Dorothy made no comment. There was no need of that. Philip read something in her eyes which was more to him than any words.

She broke the pause at last with a low, eager, "Is there no more to tell?"

So she learned of Jessie Reeves. Philip's repugnance, moral and physical, to turning back after he rode away from Trapper's Glen, had been much more intense and prolonged than in the former instance. But Dorothy learned how the compelling, rebuking eyes had constrained him; how he had turned back when he was miles away. The few sentences which followed were like strong, rapid strokes of pencil or brush. Dorothy saw the pretty, unsuspecting girl as she entered the room and took her place at the breakfast-table among the men, of whom Philip only said that he knew, when he looked in their faces, they were three of the vilest wretches walking the earth! The talk which he had managed to overhear on his return had, if possible, strengthened his first conviction. A few sentences described the bear-hunt, and the interview snatched in a few breathless moments outside the inn, and on the decision of which everything hung.

When it came to the long, perilous ride, there was something more of detail. Philip lived it all over as

he talked, and his voice—even his lips under the brown mustache—trembled a little.

Dorothy listened breathless—her eyes dry and bright, and her face getting pale. When Philip saw that, he checked himself. "I should not have told you this, Miss Draycott," he said.

"Oh, do go on," she almost gasped, and a few moments later the tears were flashing in her eyes over the safe arrival at Murray's Cattle Ranch.

But when Philip ceased talking, the gulf had been bridged. The intangible something which had baffled and annoyed Dorothy Draycott in all her relations with Philip Fallowes had vanished now. The old effort and self-consciousness of their former intercourse could never return with either.

This does not mean, however, that these young people were thinking of each other as lovers, in the way the world understands that word. People may have revealing experiences of this sort, and afterward other voices, and slighter ones, may allure and bewilder and constrain. But with Dorothy the chord which had been touched had responded with a vibration so deep and strong that it had awed and amazed her. For a little while the two souls had stood apart in a rarer atmosphere and each, in its own way, had spoken to the other. One who is capable of such an experience does not forget it. In the deeper moods, in the nobler moments of life, memory brings back the hour and the experience.

Into the silence came suddenly a long, sweet, melodious note, and then another and another.

"What is that?" exclaimed Philip, turning his pleased, startled eyes on Dorothy.

" 'The horns of Elfland softly blowing?' "

"Oh, nothing so romantic! But it cannot be possible it is nearly one o'clock!"

Philip glanced at his watch. They had been sitting there more than three hours, and it did not seem like one!

After their amazement had a little subsided, Dorothy went on to explain: "That is the horn which aunty Dayles occasionally uses to apprise people, who have roamed far afield, that it is dinner-time! But only special guests are so honored; for that ancient horn is a very precious heirloom. Her husband's greatgrandfather brought it with him, when he came to this country—a century and a half ago. It had done duty in the family as a stage-horn for almost a century before. As the family came originally from Warwickshire, I like to fancy Shakspeare himself may possibly have heard it winding over his native hills and dales!"

"I should like to blow one blast on that horn," exclaimed Philip, and his laugh now was the gay, boyish laugh which his uncle Radleigh had loved.

Dorothy laughed too—the rippling laugh which made the sweetest music of Red Knolls. "I can promise you shall have your wish, Mr. Fallowes. But, really, it is high time we were going to dinner!"

The reaction had come after the long tension of those hours. They felt a sudden freedom with each other, like happy boy and girl.

They went home in the stillness, the broad light, and the heat of the noonday. They did not say much to each other. Philip had, amid all his bliss, an occasional qualm of conscience, reflecting how successfully he had concealed from Dorothy the fact that she herself formed the central figure, the inspiring motive, of the events he related.

As they drew near the side-gate, — a pretty rustic design of cedar boughs, by Mrs. Dayles's younger son, who had succeeded his father as master of Cherry Farms, but who was now absent on a visit to his elder brother in Western New York, — Dorothy exclaimed: "There is aunty Dayles at the window. She is smiling and beckoning to us!"

Philip took off his hat; Dorothy waved her parasol. Just after they had entered the gate, she stood still, turned to Philip, and said, earnestly: "Mr. Fallowes, I do not know how to thank you for all you have told me this morning; but I think I shall be gladder all my life to know such things have happened."

XLI

"I WILL FIND A WAY!" SHE SAID

THAT evening Dorothy Draycott came out and walked alone on the piazza. May and June were drawing close to each other, and to-night a rounding moon shone brave among her flocking stars, instead of the pallid, frightened one which had glanced out at intervals between the flying clouds when she and Philip had walked together the night before.

Dorothy moved back and forth, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly; she was glad to be alone that night; she wanted to work out her thoughts clearly. For some unaccountable reason, she felt as though she had grown years older since morning.

Philip and Dorothy had found company at dinner — friends of Mrs. Dayles from the next town. The presence of the strangers was, on the whole, a relief to the young people, who were not in a mood for conversation. Philip had a consciousness of voices and laughter, and supposed he must have taken some share in the talk, and have generally comported himself so as not to attract observation; but, beyond that, his first dinner at Cherry Farms remains, to this day, a blank in his memory.

Soon after dinner, the young people had excused themselves and gone to their rooms, leaving Mrs. Dayles with her guests. When these had gone, Dorothy came downstairs, but she had hardly joined her hostess when a messenger rode in hot haste to the door. A former

neighbor of Mrs. Dayles — mother of a large family — had, without a moment's warning, been taken acutely ill. The household, including several children, was helpless and demoralized. In the confusion and distress, somebody suggested Mrs. Dayles, whose quieting presence and efficiency, in crises of this kind, were recognized throughout the county. A messenger rode in breathless haste to Cherry Farms, eight miles away. There could be but one answer to his appeal. As soon as he had received her promise, he spurred away to carry back the welcome tidings of her speedy appearance. Then Mrs. Dayles remembered that both the farm-men were absent, and would not be back for hours. There was the horse to be harnessed, and no masculine service at command!

"Never mind, aunty Dayles," exclaimed Dorothy, her native energy mounting to the occasion; "get yourself ready and I will put old Sorrel in the shafts myself!"

At that instant they heard the click of the gate-latch. Philip had just returned from the post-office, to which he had gone for his mail more than an hour before.

A few sentences from Dorothy explained the situation. Philip's Rocky Mountain experiences made him prompt in dealing with all sorts of practical emergencies. Old Sorrel and the buggy were at the gate as Mrs. Dayles appeared at the side door. Philip insisted on accompanying her.

And, in this way, it happened that Dorothy Draycott was, a few hours later, walking alone on the piazza at Cherry Farms.

But no companionship could have been so agreeable to her as that solitude. The talk to which she had

listened that morning under the apple-tree had never been absent a moment from her deeper consciousness; she wanted to be all alone with it, to go over with it—even the tones and looks which had been a part of it. This was the reason why she was so glad to be alone in that soft May night, which was fast wheeling the world, with all its fresh green, its fragrance, and its seas of unfolding bloom, into the waiting arms of summer; she would have all that evening to herself. The two or three women left in charge of the household would not disturb her.

Dorothy's thoughts and feelings were still vibrating with what she had heard. It had appealed to her imagination, to the poetic instincts, to the deep enthusiasms of her nature. “It was a great thing,” she told herself, “to know that such an experience had been lived—not talked about, not dreamed over, not written of in books, but just simply, resolutely, persistently lived! And what tests there had been—years of absence and distance, and the hard life, and the rough associations! It had all been so sane and wholesome and manly, too—a kind of joyful note all through!

Then she fell to thinking of that girl—to wondering about her. How would she feel if she knew? How did she seem to other eyes? Was she, after all, only some pretty, commonplace girl whom Philip's imagination had idealized and raised to such a supernal height? If he were to know the real woman after all these years, would he be saddened and disillusioned? That would be worst of all!

Then, in a little while, other thoughts came up. She was thinking of her own life as she had never thought of it before. Some mood of inexplicable sadness and lone-

liness crept in upon her, as they creep in at times upon all young, joyous souls. When she stood still for a moment and glanced up at the skies, the stars looked down, far, cold, inexorable. When she thought of Red Knolls, too, the words of her father, on a night when the winter winds cried high in the shrubbery, came up to her with a sort of prophetic significance, which she had not felt at the time. "My dear child, this sort of life will not go on forever."

She put out her hands with a sudden, involuntary gesture, as one does at something which repels or hurts.

"If a love like the one to whose story she had listened that morning came into a woman's life —" here Dorothy resumed her walk and drew up her head haughtily; she did not know precisely to what conclusion her wandering thoughts pointed — at all events, she was not going to pursue them! A moment later she was telling herself, very decidedly, that her interest in young Fallowes's talk had been an entirely impersonal one; she had listened to what he had told her — told her only of all the world! She had been honored by such a confidence; she must always feel grateful to him for it.

In one respect Dorothy's instinct had been clear and true; she was certain that Philip Fallowes did not regard himself in the light of a lover; she could understand, too, how all the circumstances — the absence of the charm and power of human presence, the long lack of any personal knowledge, as well as the quality of Philip's own regard — all had contributed to the unconsciousness which, to most persons, would have seemed absurd. It was inevitable that he should be forced, in his talk that morning, to bring himself much into the foreground; but this was solely, she saw, to throw into

stronger relief all he owed to that girl, all she had been to him. It was perfectly evident he was thinking of her—never once of exploiting himself—when he had told his story.

But if somebody could interpose now—somebody who knew all the facts—and bring those two together, she believed Philip would not be long in discovering the real nature of his feelings. It struck her for the first time as singular that he had never since his return—at least she had inferred as much from his talk—made an effort to see the young girl who had exercised so profound an influence on his life.

She could not ask him about this, however, as she could not make several other inquiries about which she felt a strong curiosity. "It is not likely we shall ever recur to the subject again," she said to herself.

She was walking slowly now, her head bent forward a little in reflection. The light in the hall shed through the open door a broad illuminated space on the piazza, across which her shadow was thrown as she went to and fro. There was no sound in the stillness except that of little winds gossiping in the leaves over their own secrets.

Dorothy's figure suddenly paused in the light which came through the open doorway. She had been thinking again, "There is nobody who knows!" Then she remembered there was just one person! That was herself! Just behind this came that other thought, "Would it be possible for her to interpose in any way—to bring Philip Fallows and that young girl—seven years on seventeen would mean she was no longer a slip of a girl—together!"

It was this thought which had brought Dorothy to that sudden standstill on the piazza. In a few moments

she had resumed her walk; but her movements were rapid now, impelled by the intrusion of new thoughts which had been making some strange perplexity and vague trouble within her.

"No; I cannot do it!" she was saying, with a singular pertinacity to herself. "It would be meddlesome, indelicate, impossible! It is not my business. I shall certainly not seek to hinder. It is not my place to help."

Suddenly — in a corner of the piazza this time — Dorothy Draycott came again to a standstill. The beautiful head bridled. There was a flash of triumph in the great, brown eyes; there was another flash through all her being. It came suddenly, mysteriously, overpoweringly; but almost before it passed, it had disclosed its real nature: it had been one of *hatred* to that unknown girl!

The surprise — the shock of the consciousness — made Dorothy stagger back with a little cry. It seemed as though that moment, that flash, had burned itself into her soul. She would not pause to analyze — to think what it meant. Indeed, she knew too well. If she could only get rid of that feeling which had set her heart into those wild throbs, and the blood beating fierce in her pulses!

In a little while she had resumed her walk; her face was white, her steps hurried and eager, like one who is seeking, blindly, to get away from some pursuing thing; but these gradually grew steadier as thought and purpose calmed and cleared themselves. For now Dorothy Draycott was making up her mind to the thing she would do — the thing she had said she would not do. She was the only one in the world who could do it — because she was the only one in the world who *knew*!

“I will find a way,” she said. “I will tell him to see her — to tell her all he has told me!”

And when she glanced up at the stars, she saw them looking down upon her shining and steadfast.

She went over all Philip had told her that day. But it was the last words of his poem — that poem written in his undergraduate days and inspired, as it must have appeared to others, by so slight an event — to which her thoughts turned oftenest and where they lingered longest.

She felt an intense curiosity regarding that girl of whom they had been written — to whom they belonged. If she knew now, how would she receive them? Would she put them away at first with an involuntary gesture of awe and renouncement, as one does some great, ineffable gift before which one feels rebuked and unworthy? Would she go glad and reverent all her days, remembering such words had once been spoken of her, and struggling — at least in her nobler moments, and under human conditions — to live up to their height? How small and trivial personal vanities must seem — what a false note the old praises and flatteries would have — to her now! She might be fully conscious of her beauty, but now it must have some new meaning — something that other eyes would never find in it. It should be enough for her that one pair of eyes had seen — one voice had spoken it! Then Carlyle’s words flashed across her: “A man can only see that which he brings eyes for seeing.”

Dorothy fell to wondering again if what Philip had seen, or believed he saw, in that girl’s face, was really *there!*

Then her thoughts took a wider range. Did not such

words interpret the real significance of love, of marriage? Was not that the ideal of wifehood — reflecting in dim, finite ways and amid finite conditions, something of the Infinite Love?

Then Dorothy remembered that her father would have said just this highest thing of her mother. Would not John Amoury say it of his wife? And Benjamin Dayles must often have felt it was true of his own. There must be wives all over the world of whom men could say — in their own ways — what Philip had said of that unknown girl in his poem! There must be husbands all over the world for whom wifehood had illustrated the sweetness, the tenderness, the nobility of womanhood.

Reflections of this sort were quite novel to the girl who was pacing her rounds under the watching stars.

It was very late when Dorothy went in, joining the woman who, in Mrs. Dayles's absence, had been left in charge, and who had been long on the watch for Philip's return. While they were talking, the buggy drove up to the gate.

Dorothy went out into the hall to meet young Fallowes, who brought encouraging reports. The doctor had pronounced the sick woman out of danger. She had broken down suddenly and absolutely, under the strain of added responsibilities and overwork. Mrs. Dayles's presence and efficiency had acted like a spell on the distracted household.

The young people did not prolong their talk. It was approaching midnight when Dorothy went to her room. She lay awake a good while, pondering some plans for the next day. When she heard the ancient clock in the hall below strike one, she knew it was summer again, and turned over and went to sleep.

XLII

WHERE AND HOW IT WAS TOLD

THE next morning, after breakfast, of which the young people managed to make a cheerful and highly social meal, they came out on the piazza and stood looking on the great level meadows aglow with wild flowers, a-sparkle with dews.

"What a live morning it is!" exclaimed Dorothy. "The birds are certainly doing their part at celebrating the return of summer."

"I thought the oriole who sang at my window so gloriously this morning must feel in every note that it was June!"

"Oh, yes; I heard him too." Dorothy turned as she spoke and snipped off a few dead leaves from a rose-bush, thick with buds and dews, close to the piazza-railing, and she continued: "Poor Tom! It will be hard lines for him to-day. We used always to be off together, soon after breakfast, when we were here and it was June, and the weather like this!"

"But as he is not here, will you allow me, Miss Draycott, to represent him in some poor fashion, and—take your first June walk this morning?"

This was the way she brought it about. This was what she was thinking of when she plucked the dead leaves from the rose-bush.

They went out together as soon as Dorothy had made herself ready—a process which did not require much

time. She was dressed as she had been yesterday; a fact which Philip observed and was as much delighted as though it had been a matter of greater importance. For he wanted to remember her always as she had looked to him when they sat under the apple-tree, and he had confided to her the thing which was most sacred and jealously guarded in his life. As for the day itself, it seemed, in its skies and air, in its sunshine and bloom, a piece of yesterday, with a starry, moon-flooded night between. They went the old way — through the deep lane, under the cherry-trees, amid whose blossoms swarms of bees were darting and humming. When they reached the end of the lane, Philip turned toward her with a questioning glance; she nodded, and they kept on toward the orchard.

The thing which she had made up her mind to say to him, could — it seemed to her — be said more easily under that old tree, where they sat yesterday, than anywhere else.

But Philip had never seen Dorothy so gay. There was a flush in her cheeks, a brightness in her eyes, when he glanced at her, which fairly dazzled him. Her mood — or something else — infected him. That walk to the orchard was full of jest and mirth and bright repartee. A stranger would have thought those young people — the tall, beautiful girl, the strong, handsome young fellow by her side — the gayest and happiest creatures in the world.

They reached again, by winding road and dewy meadow path, by narrow foot-bridge and dipping corner of pasture-lot, the great orchard, where the petals were falling now in pink drifts with every breath of wind. They sat down again on the rustic bench. They kept on, for a

little while, a strain of light talk; then a pause intervened. Philip glanced at Dorothy, and it struck him that her face had grown serious.

Under all the gayety of her speech and manner, which had been less spontaneous on her part than was usually the case, Dorothy's will had held itself resolutely to the purpose she had formed—under some powerful stress of feeling—the night before; she had never, for an instant, lost sight of it that morning; she had planned this walk with direct reference to carrying out her decision.

The pause was just long enough to mark the change from one mood to another. "I have been thinking a great deal of what you told me yesterday, Mr. Fallows," began the clear, soft-throated voice. "Will you excuse me for returning to the subject—for saying what I have been thinking?"

"I shall be very glad to have you say anything you like to me, Miss Draycott," replied Philip, but he was certainly startled.

"Then I think you should tell that young girl—all you have told me!"

The blood leaped to his brown cheek. She saw him bend down and gather up in his palm a little handful of fallen petals and then toss them away, and she knew he was quite unconscious of either action; he was simply trying to gain time before he spoke.

"Will you tell me what has made you think this?" he asked, at last.

It was just the opening Dorothy wanted. "Because it must be a great, a beautiful thing, to know one has been—has done so much for another. I think it would make all her life seem something nobler and more sacred."

Philip's eyes were on the greensward. She saw the color had deepened in his cheek, but she was now too deeply concerned with her own share in the drama to think much of his; she was convinced — it must be borne in mind — of the state of his affections; his obliviousness in the past might perhaps have served him better than if a lover's conscious passion had mingled with the exaltation and ideality of his regard. But, Dorothy reasoned, a man like him would not be long in discovering the true state of his feelings if he and that girl could once be brought together. As for the girl herself — what she would think or feel on knowing she had borne so high and intimate a part in a man's fate, would depend, of course, upon the depth and quality of her own nature. But all that, Dorothy concluded mentally, with lofty decision, was not in the least *her* affair.

But she might not have interposed — she certainly would not have been so persistent in what followed, if she had not been conscious of her first strong repugnance to doing this thing; if the memory of some passion, which had flamed in her soul and thrilled through her pulses, had not forced her on. She was not afraid of Philip Fallowes; she was not afraid of anybody or anything in the world but — herself!

Philip turned suddenly and bent a searching glance on Dorothy. There was something in its depth which she did not understand. "Do you think it would have that effect on her?" His voice was very quiet, but it gave her the impression of strong, repressed feeling.

"Yes." Dorothy breathed the word softly, but distinctly.

Philip's gaze turned to the grass again. "I have never

dreamed of doing what you suggest." And the quiet voice gave her still some vague impression of strong feeling held in leash. "There are reasons which I cannot explain. No! It is impossible I should tell her!"

It seemed to her that, with these words, he shrank a little through all his young, muscular frame.

"But if you were making a mistake — one you might be sorry for all your life?" she urged softly.

"What makes you think such a thing possible, Miss Draycott?" and he ground the grass under his boot-heel.

"Because she has a right to know."

"A right!"

"Yes," responded Dorothy, almost with vehemence, because her part in all this talk was a perfunctory one and seemed to be getting more and more gratuitous as she proceeded. "The woman who has been to you what she has been, has a right to know it. I think it is your duty to tell her!"

Again Philip turned and looked at Dorothy. There was something in his eyes — a depth, a bright intensity — which might have stirred her woman's intuitions if she had not been wholly possessed by another idea. Whatever she saw in his eyes, she believed their meaning was altogether for another.

"It has never struck me in that light, Miss Draycott. I cannot see my way clear to do what you insist I should," he concluded rather ineffectively, his thoughts full of a confusion and agitation which, under all the outward show of calmness, he was trying to master.

"I do not want to be intrusive," rejoined Dorothy, her sense of maidenly reserve warning her that she could not go on much longer. "But sometimes women — girls

—have a truer and deeper insight in matters of this kind than your own sex.”

There was a touch of apology in Dorothy's voice. She had begun to ask herself why she was assuming such a responsibility in this man's fate. All the time she felt goaded on in spite of herself, by some feeling, some dread, she could not or would not stop to analyze.

There was a little silence. The day was growing hot; the dews had disappeared from the grass; the birds' songs grew fainter in the apple-boughs.

Then Philip spoke again. She felt some inexplicable change in his voice. “Will you tell me, Miss Draycott, if it were your own self — if — if you were that girl, you would wish — you would be glad to know?”

And Dorothy answered, “I should wish — I should be glad to know.”

There was another pause. Dorothy spoke once more. She knew this would be her last appeal. Whenever, in the future, she recalled this hour, it should be with no accusing memory rising in her consciousness. She must be able to tell her soul she had done all and more for another than she would have asked for herself. “Mr. Fallowes, do you not see I am right? Will you not promise me that you will seek this girl — that you will tell her all you have told me?”

Philip Fallowes felt that the moment had come. He turned toward Dorothy; his face was white, but his eyes held now a singular, penetrating brightness. “I should not have to go far to seek or try long to find her. The girl of that old pine wood and of my poem is sitting beside me, Miss Draycott!”

He felt her start and quiver; he saw her bewildered, half-frightened glance; then he saw the blood leap scarlet

to her face one moment and leave it white the next; and he knew that she understood.

A sound of swift feet crushed the grass; a shout broke suddenly on the stillness. "Halloo, Fallowes! Affirm yourself, instanter!"

Tom had returned!

That call of his old classmate jarred every nerve in Philip's body; but his first thought was for Dorothy. She, at least, must be shielded at this crisis from facing her brother. The old habit of his Western life of being ready for emergencies on the instant, served him now. In a flash he was on his feet; in another, he emerged from the apple-tree.

"I affirm myself, Draycott! What does this mean? Have you stolen the wings of the wind?"

"Not precisely; but I managed to board a night train, which, in the end, amounts to pretty much the same thing!"

By this time the two young fellows had gripped each other's hands. "I have arranged everything at the house," Tom went on rapidly. "Rods and flies all in prime order — Wagon at the gate — Not a moment to lose! You and I, Fallowes, are not to be cheated of our fun, after all! Splendid day for the streams! I arranged programme last night before I fell asleep to the shriek of the locomotive."

Fallowes thought of the girl he had left under the apple-tree. It seemed to him a good deal like standing up under the tortures of an Indian war-dance to adapt himself to Tom Draycott's mood; but there was no help for it. "Glorious day for the woods and brooks!" he rejoined.

By this time they were making rapid strides for the

wagon. Tom was in huge spirits; he had arrived about half an hour ago, and, to use his own metaphor, "made things spin lively." He had learned from one of the men, while they were busied with the fishing tackle, the cause of Mrs. Dayles's absence. "Dorothy was nowhere to be found," he added.

"I certainly saw her a few minutes before I left the house," exclaimed Philip, hoping his good angel would pardon the subterfuge.

"I understood from the man that you both had gone to visit the orchard," continued Tom. "I must have got things mixed up somehow, in my hurry. At all events, she will learn, when she returns, about my getting back and carrying you off for the day. How have you been getting on, old fellow, at Cherry Farms?"

"Gloriously! I shall bless you to the last day of my life, Draycott, for bringing me to this Paradise!"

"For haling you here, you might better say. I had almost to get you off by force of arms, you remember!"

"I remember. How has the business turned out, Draycott?"

"Without a flaw! Client is beatific over the turn of affairs! I had to rush things to get them through in shape in one day."

"Yes — oh, yes — certainly."

Tom glanced at him and then continued, in his eager tone and high spirits, relating details of what had happened and congratulating himself on their securing this day for the fishing.

"Yes; oh, yes — by all means," rejoined Philip, when the voice ceased at his side.

Tom broke out now. "What ails you, Fallowes?"

You haven't heard one syllable of what I have been saying to you!"

Philip, with a mighty effort, shook himself free from reflections, insisted that the fault was all on Tom's side; he had gone off and left him in an enchanted spot and his wits—as the natural result—were a good deal muddled.

At that instant they came in sight of the wagon. Tom, with a boyish shout, started toward it on the run, and Philip followed.

But the latter had had his lesson. He put Dorothy that day, as far as possible, out of his thoughts. He threw himself into the sport with a will, and Tom had no farther cause for criticisms. He had never known Philip Fallowes, even in their old Harvard days, in a gayer, more rollicking mood.

XLIII

“IT HAD ALL COME BACK TO HER!”

DOROTHY DRAYCOTT sat a long time — how long she will never know — under the apple-tree that morning. The first feeling she was conscious of was a profound gratefulness to Philip for sparing her a meeting with Tom at that moment.

The shock of that transcendent surprise had been so overpowering that, for a while, she almost failed to realize her identity. Was she Dorothy Draycott, or somebody else, to whom Philip Fallowes had spoken those words, leaving her sitting there all alone with them in the stillness!

And because the truth was too overwhelming for heart or brain to compass at once, she turned away, dazzled and confounded, to her first memories of him. The week at Amoury Roost, which, as we have seen, had grown rather dim in the intervening years, came up now more distinctly, with all its varied life and incidents. She recalled, with some effort, their first meeting in the drawing-room, when Tom, who had accidentally come upon his old classmate somewhere on Red Berry Roads, had brought him in and presented him to her. But he must have seen her before that time. It was in an old pine wood evidently, and he was asleep there when she rode in on her horse, — a superb creature, he had called him, — and the sight of her had inspired his poem, whose last words had said — Dorothy put them away with a

little, involuntary gesture as something too great and sacred for her to look at, to remember, now she had learned they had a distinct and personal relation to herself — something which made her conscience feel, at that moment, that such words did not belong to her — that they were a gift of which she was not worthy.

Again her memory went back, searching in that old summer. She recalled various scenes in which Philip Fallowes had figured, mostly in connection with Tom; she had always associated the two together. Then there had been some walks on the piazza, with talks — these must have been very rudimentary on her part; she was very young at that time!

But nothing gave her the clue that she wanted.

At last she rose, left the orchard, and started for home. She recalled how she and young Fallowes had gone that same way a little while before, with jest and laughter; and how, under all her gayety, she never for a moment lost sight of her purpose — that purpose she had carried out — to such a consummation!

She stood still suddenly with a little breathless cry. It had all come back to her! She and Caliph were having that morning race over Red Berry Roads; she remembered just where she turned off from the hot highway into that dim, old pine wood; she felt the fresh coolness enfold her; she breathed the sweet scents; she gazed about the shadowy stillness again. How lovely it had all seemed! She even remembered how her hair had got loosened by that wild race, and how she had caught it up while she breathed Caliph, and then, after a little while, turned and cantered out into the road again. What a slight happening it was! And yet *he* had been there — *he* had seen it all, lying among

the shadows! And a "wind of destiny" had blown through that hour, and what events — what a long drama had been unfolding from it through the years — a drama whose climax had been reached that morning with some words which had left her sitting helpless, speechless, stunned with amazement, under that century-old apple-tree.

All these thoughts swept through Dorothy's mind while she stood in the old winding highway, all aglare now in the sunshine; she did not know when she resumed her walk; indeed, she did not know anything which was going on about her, until she found herself in her own room and was glad to be alone. Even Mrs. Dayles's absence was a relief at that time!

In the silence thoughts and feelings came and went; some of them lingered and were full of a great amazement, exultation, joy. To think that she — Dorothy Draycott — had been such an inspiring power, such an ennobling, uplifting influence in a human life! All the deeper, finer side of her nature thrilled and glowed with that thought. Never, in her highest, most aspiring moods, had she dreamed that so grand a part would be assigned her! If she felt some of the natural pleasure and elation of youth over this consciousness, the tears in her eyes swelled from depths of awe and gratitude.

Dorothy's whole being was stirred with new thoughts, new emotions. She and Philip Fallowes would always have this knowledge — it must be a sacred one — between them. The blood suddenly flashed scarlet in Dorothy's face. She remembered now her conviction that he was in love with the girl of his poem — that it was only necessary he should meet her to become satisfied of this

fact himself! It had all been a mistake, of course. She should never have conceived such an idea—the beautiful head bridling—had the dimmest notion entered her mind that the girl could possibly be—herself!

But another matter soon swallowed up everything else in her mind. She went over rapidly, word by word, sentence by sentence, with the talk that morning. As she did this, her own part in it began to show in a new light. She saw now how she had urged Philip Fallowes—drawn him on—fairly forced him into the confession he had made with evident reluctance; she had no right to urge him in that way—to persist—to leave him no choice.

No doubt he would regret his yielding to her importunities when he calmly went over it all. She must seem to him to have gone beyond the limits of womanly delicacy and propriety; she seemed now to have done this herself! It was assuming too much; it was not her place to interpose—to be so officious, so absolute—in a man's fate! That old, beautiful ideal must be dimmed in his imagination forever! Then—when he came to think it over—how could he explain her urgency to himself? To what possible motive could he ascribe it! Her ignorance—now that she knew the truth—began to seem a little fatuous to Dorothy herself. Would he not think—would he not, indeed, be forced to think—that she must have had some inkling of the facts? All Dorothy's sensitive, girlish pride was in arms now; all her woman's delicacy recoiled, mortified and stung to the core. She saw, too, in a moment, there was nothing to be done. All feminine tact and devices would be useless here. To approach the subject with explanations would only have the effect of confirm-

ing Philip Fallowes's opinion, beside being an insult to him and another to herself!

The hours which followed these reflections were probably, in some aspects, the unhappiest of Dorothy Draycott's life.

The young men did not return until late in the afternoon. Tom, in a jubilant mood over his catch, went straight to his sister's room. "Dear old girl," he exclaimed, after a brotherly kiss, "I couldn't stay to hunt you up this morning. I pounced on Fallowes in the orchard and carried him off bodily. We have had magnificent luck, and brook-trout will be in abundant evidence at supper." He strode off to give directions regarding the fish.

XLIV

THE MOMENT WHICH REVEALED ALL

“It was shameful! It was cruel! It was brutal!”

These were the staccato sentences in which Philip Fallows was expressing his opinion to himself as he paced up and down the large, old-fashioned, and delightfully comfortable front chamber which had been allotted to him at Cherry Farms. At last he was free to give rein to his thoughts, which he had sternly curbed all day; he was going over the talk which Dorothy, in the room on the opposite side of the hall, had been constantly revolving during the last hours; but his conclusions were wide apart as the poles from her own. “Of course,” he was saying to himself, “I should have had strength and manliness enough not to succumb in that fashion,” recalling remorsefully the look of blank amazement, the rush of color to Dorothy’s face, and the swift pallor which followed, as the real import of his words forced themselves upon her consciousness. “It will be impossible for her ever to forgive me! It would be the most natural thing in the world for her to suppose—indeed, I don’t see how she can avoid it—that all my talk had the deliberate purpose of leading up to this point, and that I was seeking to figure as a hero in her eyes. In that case there is nothing left for her but to despise me forever!”

The blood flamed hot in every pulse; he felt weak and shaken as a girl. How could he ever bring himself to

look in her face again! He was conscious of a wild impulse to rush away from Cherry Farms without a word.

Then he heard Tom's voice shouting to him to come down-stairs, and he had no choice left but to call back that he would be there the next moment.

Dorothy heard the shout, and her woman's pride and sense of proprieties came to the rescue. Of course she must go down and meet young Fallowes as though nothing had happened. However she might have fallen from the old pedestal in his thoughts and imagination, he should see, at least, that she had some saving instinct for common civilities and social requirements.

A few minutes later, Dorothy came down-stairs. Philip was standing on the piazza where Tom had just left him.

"Tom tells me you have had splendid luck to-day with the trout," said the clear, unfaltering voice. "I have come down to congratulate you, Mr. Fallowes."

He turned and saw her standing there, — the tall girl, — the brown eyes very bright and a deepened glow in her cheeks. Man as he was, with his nerves of steel, and his long training in all sorts of perils, he could not have done this thing with the light touch of tone and manner, the easy grace, of that young girl!

But he managed to take her cue, as he drew a piazza chair toward her. "Yes, Miss Draycott, we have had huge good luck to-day."

At that moment they saw a buggy drawing up at the gate. Auntie Dayles had returned.

They went down to meet her; to learn that order had been brought out of chaos, and that she had left behind her a woman, capable and efficient, at the household helm.

At supper, Tom, elated over his day's sport, talked

and jested in his most irrepressible vein, which was probably the best thing he could have done.

When Dorothy and aunty Dayles were alone together the latter said to the girl: "Oh, my dear, your brother's friend is an unusual young man! I was amazed when we reached the house to see how soon he seized the situation, and set about improving it. I could hardly believe my eyes; he just took off his coat—that elegant-mannered, young man—and made the coffee and broiled the steak; and did them perfectly; he made such fun of the whole thing, too! 'What is a fellow good for,' he said, 'who has lived in a log-cabin and bunked in the wilderness, and learned how to shift for himself, if he cannot do his part in an emergency of this sort?' Then that woman—gone suddenly all to pieces with household worries and cares—he lifted her in his arms as tenderly as he would a baby, and laid her on the lounge by the window, where the wind blew sweet from the meadows. Those children, too! They were shy, and stared at him open-mouthed and open-eyed at first. But he soon brought them round. I heard one of them ask him if he wouldn't come there to live and tell them such bang-up good stories every day!"

Dorothy laughed, but a thrill of pleasure shot through her. With all that ideality, that imaginative side, which Philip Fallowes had shown to her only of all the world, he was no dreaming enthusiast. He did not plume himself on his finer tastes and his lofty superiority to ordinary human beings; he threw himself heartily, even joyously, into the daily endeavor, the varied activities, if need were, the homely duties of life!

But Dorothy's guarded response did not let one word of these reflections escape her. "Mr. Fallowes certainly

did himself credit, aunty Dayles. Of course *he* never said a syllable about it, but I shall tell Tom, who will reply, 'I should have expected just that thing of Fallowes; but I challenge you to show me the second fellow who would have done it!'"

When they repaired to the sitting-room, and some silence intervened, Tom suggested a game of whist as a proper sedative to bedtime, and appealed to aunty Dayles to take a hand.

The game had progressed for a quarter of an hour when Tom laid down his cards with a grunt of dismay. "What has got into you young people?" he exclaimed. "One who didn't know better would suspect this was your first trial at whist!"

Philip flushed one sort of red and Dorothy another. In their confusion they glanced at each other. Tom's question — his entire obliviousness in certain directions — struck their young sense of the ludicrous. The long inward tension gave way. They both broke out into irrepressible, spontaneous laughter. It had that quality which is sure to communicate itself to listeners. The others soon found themselves laughing too.

When the mirth had a little subsided, Tom broke out again: "I should like to inquire what you are laughing at! It is not fair you and Fallowes should have all the fun to yourselves!"

Dorothy's wits were not long in rallying. "Tom Draycott, you are getting to be as big an autocrat as the Czar himself! The idea that anybody may not laugh in your presence without being challenged in that tone, to give the reason why!"

The laugh this time was turned on Tom, who, it must be admitted, seemed to enjoy it.

That night Philip said to himself, as he recalled the matter: "Of course she could not help laughing. That clever fellow's obfuscation was so apparent!"

And Dorothy, in her own room, was saying to herself: "Of course he must laugh—Tom's innocence was so transparent; but that could not affect his conviction that I suspected all the time I was urging him to speak!"

So both of these young people were bent upon making themselves miserable without the slightest reason for it.

At breakfast the next morning, Tom Draycott brought down his clenched fist on the table. "Confound it!" he exclaimed, half to himself. "That bigger business entirely knocked the smaller one out of my head! I promised the fellow to look it up."

Everybody stared and awaited further developments. These were not long in coming. Tom had promised one of the clerks in the office—a young fellow whom he liked—to make a point of transacting some business for him during his trip. The matter needed some investigation and involved a visit to the adjoining town. It would probably consume at least three hours, and the young men were to leave Cherry Farms soon after dinner, in order to reach Boston at midnight.

"Of course you could ride over with me," Tom said to Fallowes, when they were alone together; "but it would be a bore to hang around while we were investigating the legal aspects of the case. I shall have to leave you in Dorothy's hands again."

His tone half implied this was a choice of evils!

Philip laughed and flushed. Tom did not notice the latter. He went on in a moment, half apologetically: "If I had foreseen how things were to turn out, I should hardly have ventured to urge you so strongly to come

with me. But, at all events, the fates were beneficent yesterday."

"My dear fellow," rejoined Fallowes fervently, "I shall always be inexpressibly grateful to you for bringing me to Cherry Farms."

At that moment the horse was led up. Philip accompanied Tom to the gate, wished him good luck, and watched him canter off at a smart pace.

Tom little suspected what a boon his departure was to his friend. Philip had, at last, made up his mind that he owed Miss Draycott an apology for the unpardonable abruptness of his disclosure of her identity with the girl of his poem. But all the time he was convinced that anything he could say would be ineffective and futile; he could not approach the burning matter which made him writhe inwardly; he could not tell Miss Draycott he had not the faintest idea of making himself the hero of his story!

The day was not like the preceding ones. A dreamy southwest wind haunted the air. Silver-gray clouds, between which shone delicious breaks and gleams of azure, muffled the sky. An ineffable peace brooded over the June landscape. It was easy to imagine in that mood of nature that the great, blatant world had paused for a moment to hear if the higher Voices spoke.

Dorothy came out on the piazza as Philip mounted the steps. "Has Tom gone already?" she asked.

Philip lifted his cap. "Yes; he was in a hurry to be off."

Dorothy Draycott stood still. She wore this morning a gown of cream-colored wool, whose light, soft folds clung close to her figure. She, too, had something to say; she had had a dozen minds about it since she went

upstairs from breakfast. It would be a comparatively easy matter, if that were all, to make a formal apology for her unwarrantable interference yesterday. But that would not help matters; that would not touch the thing which galled and stung her maiden pride and delicacy, — the thought that Philip would always feel she must have suspected beforehand what she had at last forced him to reveal.

The hour had struck! The great life-moment had come for both. The wonder was, whether either would have the wisdom or insight to know it.

Suddenly, with a kind of blind, desperate impulse that he must not let the chance slip, Philip spoke. "Miss Draycott, I can never forgive myself for what I said yesterday. It was unpardonable — it was shameful! I did not —"

The words failed him. He grew white as he gazed at her. In an instant one of those flashes of conviction, which nothing can make more absolute, passed through him. Many things — especially those talks in the orchard — had been leading up to this knowledge. Indeed, it is a question whether it had not for years lain in his subconsciousness. But, at all events, Philip Fallowes knew now that he loved the girl standing before him — not as some ideal being, set apart and sacred in a shrine, but with a man's human love for the one woman he would take into his heart and life, for his most intimate companionship, his deepest joy, his crowning blessedness. In that illuminating moment he saw, too, that it was better to have the ideal of his imagination transformed into the joyous, blooming girl before him, full of youth and life and human instincts and impulses, and the human limitations that come with them.

In that great, critical moment of his life, the calm followed swiftly for Philip Fallows on the shock and tumult of his surprise. He did not suspect that his eyes had spoken for him, as Dorothy took their full radiance in her own. As for speech, there was no need of it — whether it tried and faltered, or grew eloquent with all the power and beauty of words.

Dorothy did not grow pale, as she had done the day before, under that overpowering surprise. A hitherto unsuspected, unimagined happiness stole over her; but there was a great calm at its heart. In a moment they both knew!

All the pain and doubt and misinterpretation of a minute before disappeared in this that had come to them; and that seemed now as beautiful, as right, and natural as that morning sun shining in the heavens.

With a nature like Dorothy's, all disguises would be sure to vanish at such a moment, and her true self come to the surface. She answered the question in Philip's eyes with a look which no other had ever surprised in the depths of her own; she laid her hand on his coat-sleeve, and her low, tremulous words were characteristic. "O Philip, I am glad — I thank God it was I and not — not that other girl!"

In a corner of the piazza a great honeysuckle vine formed, with twisting branches and latticework, a kind of rude bower. Philip brought chairs and they sat together under the leafy roof which, a little later, would seem all a-flutter with red-winged birds, when the vine broke into gay flowering. Nobody came or went. For the next three hours they were as much alone together as though they were the only people in the world.

As for what they said to each other — oh, my reader,

if you have come to know them in these pages, there is no need I should tell you!

At the end of those three hours Tom came up on full gallop to the gate. The time seemed as long as eternity, and yet brief as passing moments to the young lovers. They went down to meet him.

"Business all fixed up!" he exclaimed triumphantly. "It is to be pleasure for the next few hours before we start. Have you been good to him, Dollikins?"

Philip answered for her. "She has been supremely good to me, Tom!"

There was some unusual depth and significance in his tones. Tom glanced from one to the other. A new light and joy were in their eyes as they stood there, side by side, — he in his young manhood's strength and power, and she in her maiden's grace and beauty. Even Tom was impressed by the sight as he smiled and lifted his hat. But he was no wiser, as appeared from his reflections as he rode off to the stable.

"Dorothy has kept her word, I see. Now she has got to know Fallowes better, she will find he is worth a whole crowd of those fellows, with their nonsense and moonshine, who are always hanging about her."

XLV

AS DONALD DRAYCOTT RELATED IT

MORE than a week after the young men's visit to Cherry Farms, Mr. and Mrs. Draycott came into the library after dinner. Dorothy was expected home the next day.

Mr. Draycott sat absorbed by the table, apparently contemplating the figures on the rug; his wife glanced up at him two or three times. The lights were turned low; but a delicious breeze from the east had cooled the dusk, and played among the window draperies and brought occasionally a whiff from the sea.

At last Donald Draycott looked up and said to his wife, "Grace, something has happened to-day."

"I was sure of that," she replied, and she folded her hands on her lap, perhaps to quiet the premonitory throb at her heart.

"Young Fallowes appeared at the office this morning; he wanted some private talk and we went into the inner sanctum; he came from New York solely for this interview; he stayed four hours, and was obliged to be back to-night. The Western business is engrossing just now. There was no time even for a call on Tom."

There was a slight pause here. Mrs. Draycott did not avail herself of it.

"Grace, that young man came to tell me that he loved Dorothy!"

"And she — does the child know?" asked Mrs. Draycott in a low, breathless tone.

"Yes; it was with her consent, with her entire wish, that he made this visit. The thing has all come about, it appears, at Cherry Farms. Dorothy had no more idea of his feeling than — than I had when I went to town this morning."

"I have been expecting this must come!" remarked Mrs. Draycott quietly.

Her husband turned quickly on her now with an amazed look. "And you never told me this, Grace!"

"No, Donald." The admission was half apologetic, half pleading. "I tried to, several times, but something held me back. Will you go on now?"

"I cannot believe any father ever listened to quite such a story from the man who was seeking his daughter's hand. I can hardly conceive how such a story was lived."

"Tell me, Donald," rejoined Mrs. Draycott.

He answered by talking far into the summer midnight, relating what young Fallowes had said to him that day.

Mrs. Draycott, leaning forward a little, listened with that intent, breathless interest which lets no word escape. Occasionally she broke in with some swift interrogation or low exclamation. Once in a while her husband knew, by her hurried breathing, that there was a sob in her throat. There were passages in the story when his own voice grew husky, and the tears smarted in his eyes.

When at last he ceased talking, his wife said, "I think you are right, Donald; I cannot believe any other lover ever brought to his suit quite such a story as this!"

"When one thinks of what a mere slip of a girl she was — just going off to school, you remember; how little he saw of her; how young he was himself, too, and what he had to go through afterward, the harsh conditions, the long absence, the hard pull of daily life which try a man soul and body, and with only that slight memory to cling to; and how she — our little girl — became such an exalting influence, such an inspiring motive in his life, — surpasses, in some of its aspects, all I have ever read or dreamed of young love. It was hard on the fellow at times to speak of it, — I could see that. He would stammer and blush like a school-boy! Then he would forget everything in the depth and strength of his feeling. The curious thing about it all is, that he did not regard himself in the light of a lover. It struck me, as he talked, that he had held her apart from him that he might in essential things draw her closer."

"And Dorothy?" asked the mother.

"I suspect it all came to her in just as overwhelming a surprise. But he did not say that; he left her to tell her own part."

"Donald, did you promise him Dorothy?"

"No, Grace. I would not do that without first seeing you — without first seeing them both at Red Knolls. But I think he did not, at the last, go away disconsolate."

After this, Mrs. Draycott related to her husband some things which Philip Fallowes himself did not know — it was the look which she had seen in his eyes that day when he stood by the window awaiting Tom's return, and Dorothy came suddenly into the room.

"It seemed to me whenever I attempted to speak,

that the right words — the words which fitly interpreted that look — would not come. There was something in it of all he told you to-day. You understand now, Donald?"

"As I could not before he had spoken. You were wise to wait, Grace."

XLVI

HOW EVENTS CULMINATED AT RED KNOLLS

THE next day Dorothy returned home. During the last week Philip had written with a lover's promptness. She fancied their mutual secret had been kept inviolate, even from Mrs. Dayles; but there was something in her last look, in the lingering tenderness of her parting words, which awoke a first doubt in her mind. Mrs. Dayles had keen insight, but she had never opened the way to any confidences. She must have known she would have these in time, and felt they belonged first to Dorothy's father and mother.

Philip hurried to Red Knolls in two or three days after Dorothy's return. The day following his appearance, it was all settled in the simplest fashion. When the four were alone together, Donald Draycott placed his daughter's hand in that of young Fallows and said to him: "No other man could have so deserved — so won her. I give her to you, Philip, my one 'little hearth flower,' my Dorothy!"

Then Mrs. Draycott put her arms about his neck and called him "her own boy," and when he looked in those tender eyes he knew she had brought him something which his boyhood and youth had always, half consciously, missed and longed for.

On this occasion one topic was discussed with some seriousness, under all the surface jest and mirth. An affair of this sort could no longer be kept secret from

Tom Draycott. It would be a stupendous surprise to him; it was uncertain how he would take it.

Even Philip — when it came to the pinch — shrank from making the disclosure which involved laying bare the most intimate and sacred feelings of his life to one who had no experience in these matters, and who had a kind of superior, amused tolerance for romance and sentiment. When the matter came up, Fallowes actually turned red and, with a little embarrassed laugh, said, “I see it will not be an easy matter to make Draycott understand!”

Dorothy’s cheeks were scarlet. “You know what Tom is! I never could tell him — never!”

“But we cannot all shirk this thing and leave Tom to find out for himself,” interposed Mr. Draycott, after a hearty laugh. “I confess to a doubt of my capacity to deal with the fellow on such a delicate occasion!”

“I think I can make Tom understand!” interposed Mrs. Draycott, with an amused smile at the corners of her mouth, as she looked from one to the other of the big, helpless men.

“We will leave it all in your hands with thanks, Grace,” rejoined her husband. “Yes, I see!” he added, half to himself; “Tom’s mother will make him understand.”

Young Draycott returned the next day; he had been away on some professional business. He was amazed to learn that Fallowes had been staying at Red Knolls for a couple of days, and though he had left for Springfield that morning, was expected to return at night. Tom found some consolation in the prospect this afforded him.

After dinner his mother claimed him for a while. The

talk took place in her own room. It was uninterrupted and prolonged.

The result can best be told in Tom's own words. He and his mother repaired at last to the library. Fallowes meanwhile had returned, and was sitting in the library with Dorothy and her father.

There was a little silence as the two entered. Tom turned to the young people. "Well, if you haven't stolen a tremendous march on me! I throw up my cap! You must be a clever brace, for you have proved conclusively, indubitably, my incapacity to see what is going on before my eyes!"

Everybody laughed and Tom, as soon as he could be heard, went on in a tone half aggrieved, half resentful: "So I was prejudged too material and unromantic and altogether too prosaic a being to comprehend the finer and more poetic aspects of this affair!"

Everybody laughed again; but nobody seemed to have anything to say. Then Tom strode over to Philip, who was sitting near Dorothy. "You and I are to be brothers-in-law it seems!" addressing Fallowes. "Heaven be praised it is you! If it were any other fellow who had stolen my Dollikins away from me — why, I would just shoot him!"

"Tom — dear old boy! — I owe all this happiness to you!"

Then those two big fellows, for the first time in their lives, kissed each other!

Philip, bringing all modern auxiliaries of telephone and telegraph to his aid, managed, with brief absences, to extend his visit for more than a week. In an incredibly short time it seemed natural and right — in accordance with the eternal fitness of things — that he should

be at Red Knolls, son and brother and lover in the household.

As for Tom, he had a subject for infinite jests now. But he had too strong a conviction of the quality of Philip Fallowes's character to associate any weak sentimentality with what he had said or lived. He constantly felicitated himself on the fact that he was to have the one brother-in-law whom he would have chosen out of all the world!

Dorothy never tired of hearing stories of his Western life. Her questions often made him laugh. They were so wide of the mark! "Some time we will go and see it all together?" he said.

But at this time they made few plans for their future. The present was bliss enough.

Philip, however, never doubted that at times the old craving for the mountain heights and strengths would come back; but he was learning during these days that the home of his heart, his supreme rest and joy, would be at Red Knolls. Circumstances, too, all pointed one way. Mining interests would be likely to require his presence and direction largely at the East.

One day the two were walking in the grounds, and Dorothy said to Philip: "I heard papa telling Tom at dinner last night that though mines were always a very uncertain quantity, there seemed excellent reasons for believing you would, one of these days, be a rich man. Are you glad, Philip?"

He laughed at something in her tone. "I suppose a man who did not care would be something more or less than human; but the man who has had money and who has had to live without it knows best what it can do, and what it cannot."

"Now the greatest thing has come to us, Philip, the grand fortune, if that came too, would not seem so much. We should feel it belonged largely to others who had missed our happiness."

Philip answered this remark in a fashion which had become very much of a habit of his, when they were alone together and Dorothy said—things.

But much of the time they were gay—these young people—as youth and happiness could make them. Philip fell into a habit of jesting and rallying Dorothy, which made her tell him he would soon be as bad as Tom!

XLVII

THE TALK ON THE LOWER PIAZZA

"I SHALL be a little sorry for both when the parting comes to-morrow. They have been in a very heaven of happiness during the last week."

Mrs. Draycott said this to her husband soon after they came out to walk on the piazza. It was a night in the last of June. The winds seemed to have gone to sleep forever, and the moon was at the full.

"Yes; I have observed the happiness of those young people has seemed to pervade the air of Red Knolls. Of course that is quite as it should be. Nobody has a right not to share his own good, whatever that may be, with others. In this case, the servants have looked gayer and happier, as though they had their crumbs from the heaped table. Grace," bending down on her from his tall height, with a laugh in his eyes, "you cannot escape your fate — the world is going to call us father and mother *in law*."

Her laugh was like a girl's. "Who cares what the world calls us when we have a son who more than realizes — in certain ways — all that we could have hoped for our child!"

"Yes; the more I see them together, the more I am satisfied that, under certain surface and temperamental differences, — which are to be desired in the closest relations, — there is a very wide range of vital sympathies, tastes, and aspirations in common."

"Then it all has come about so naturally! It has been a taking of Philip right into our hearts — into our home. I have only one dread, Donald," her voice lowering a little.

"What is that?"

"It may be a weakness, a superstition, but, in a world like this — where the air is full of chance and change, where there are such possibilities of sorrow and tragedy, — I almost tremble in the presence of such happiness. I ask myself whether mortals have a right to it."

"I understand all that, Grace; I had something of that feeling in our early married life; but now I have had you by me twenty-seven years I have begun to feel that happiness is the right and natural thing, and that no parting — even the last one — can separate us."

Her beautiful eyes smiled up at him, but she did not speak.

In a moment he went on: "And though youth and love and joy are having their time now, we know that the inevitable experiences are waiting. Philip has had his lesson — in the sternest of practical schools. As for Dorothy, I do not believe she will be less brave to meet her fate because of the pleasant ways of her youth. Then," he continued in a moment, "those two young people are going to help and sustain and inspire each other. I think you and I have proved that is a part, at least, of what married life should do."

And the woman's low response seemed to breathe rather from her heart than her lips: "Yes; we have proved it, Donald."

XLVIII

THE TALK ON THE UPPER PIAZZA

WHILE this talk had been going on, another had been taking place on the upper piazza at Red Knolls. Some of the talk was light and gay as the youth and joy in which it had its source, and some of it was earnest and grave as life sometimes looks, even at its springtide.

For a while the talk concerned itself much with the days at Cherry Farms — days which the two would always look back upon as the most important epoch in their lives.

“If Tom had not carried you off almost by main force, we might never have known, Philip!” said Dorothy.

“Of course I understand the immense debt I must always owe him.”

“He is behaving beautifully, too. I am perfectly sure he trumped up that excuse to go off to-night and leave us together!” In a few moments Dorothy stopped short and said to him, “Philip, did I ever, in any form, shape, or fashion, propose to you?”

He stared, and then burst into a roar of laughter. “What put that absurdest of ideas into your head?”

“It just struck me that I could not remember *your* doing that — in quite the approved form. It is a sensitive point with me, too, because, for the last year, Tom and I have had one favorite subject of discussion. When all others failed, we fell back on that.”

“What could it possibly have been?”

"Simply whether a woman has as good a right — in the nature of things — to propose as a man. Of course I took the negative side with emphasis. Tom stood as stoutly on the affirmative."

"How delightful! I wish I could have been present at some of those discussions."

"Oh, you will have plenty of chances! I only wanted to be sure I had not, in practice, disavowed all my principles."

Not long after this little side issue of fun, the two were gazing over the parapet on the terraces below in that white moonlight which threw all the shrubbery into strong relief and touched all common things with a mystic, ethereal loveliness. The two figures — the young man and the girl by his side — gave the scene just the human element — the touch of romance and drama — which it needed.

"This night reminds me of that one at Amoury Roost, when we had our first walk together," said Philip, breaking a pause. "You wore a white gown, too. It seems to me it must have been this very one! How it all comes up now! I was a callow youth then, and you were the only girl in the world as you walked by my side. In that respect, at least, my opinion is not changed to-night!"

Dorothy laughed, a little, touched kind of laugh, but she did not reply, and in a few moments they resumed their walk.

When she did speak, a little later, her voice had a serious, half-appealing note. "Philip, I cannot let you go away to-morrow without saying something which I should have done before." She felt she had made an ineffective conclusion.

He took her up lightly. "Don't — please — keep me waiting an instant longer!"

"Oh, but this is no light matter! It is my duty to tell you. I have been feeling that all day. The difficulty will be in making you believe what I say."

"Then it will be the first time. But go on, Dorothy!"

"There was no such girl as you imagined that night at Amoury Roost; there is no such young woman as you think, existing now!"

His one whistled note was a very accented protest.

"I knew you would treat it in that way. But it is the truth. That kind of Dorothy was a beautiful, impossible creature of your imagination. All these happy days my soul has been saying to me, 'You are not worthy, Dorothy Draycott, of this great love which has come to you!' It must say that to yours now. For I am dismayed when I think of the contrast between your ideal and the real woman you will have to know. How great, how cruel, must be your surprise and disappointment! No — you must hear me now!" as he crushed the hand on his arm in a passion of tenderness and protest. "I am full of faults, vanities, tempers — but there is no use going over with the list! I sometimes actually get disgusted trying to be good in bits and places, and feel like giving full rein to all the badness which is in me!"

"Dorothy," said Philip, gravely this time, "if I were to make a clean breast of it at this moment, I should not have courage to look you in the face!"

"Oh, you have proved what you are, Philip!" she answered, with passionate conviction. "In such ways, too, as I think no man ever did before — ever could again! What had you ever seen — what had I ever said or done — that you should have found in me such memo-

ries, such help and inspiration! It is now — it always must be — the supreme wonder of my life that such a thing, such a love, should come to me, — just Dorothy Draycott! I used to think that papa's and mamma's marriage was the most beautiful in the world; but he had mamma! I have often heard him say that he owed everything that was best in him to her presence and influence; but you, Philip — you had nobody, and how bravely you lived through all those hard, lonely years — how grandly you bore all their tests! Why should I have so rich a gift, and others go so scanted!"

"My dear Dorothy, the girl who can talk and feel as you are doing to-night proves that my instinct was true — alike at Amoury Roost and at Miner's Rest!"

This was a part of their talk as they walked back and forth "on the upper piazza" in the June night.

But once, at something which Dorothy said, Philip burst into a half-touched, half-embarrassed laugh. "Talk of me!" he said. "What an inveterate idealist you are, Dorothy! I am covered with confusion — I want to hide my head, when I hear you going on with your glowing, unmerited adjectives, and remember the very imperfect, ordinary sort of fellow I am. How will you bear it when some day you learn the truth and are disillusioned!"

"But, as I said, you have proved what you are — proved it before heaven and earth!" There was an exultant ring in Dorothy's voice.

"I proved that I knew the best when I saw it! Oh, yes — there *was* one thing more!"

"What was that?"

"I proved what a woman — what a young girl — may be to a man."

Was it because Dorothy was a woman that she had the last word? At all events, it was one of those words which leave no sting behind them.

“Ah, but that depends so much, Philip, upon the man!”

THE END

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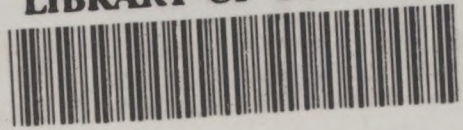
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